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CAMPAIGNING

IN KAFFIRLAND

OR

Scenes and Adventures

IN

THE KAFFIR WAR OF 1851-2.

38041

BY

CAPT. W. R. KING,

74TH HIGHLANDERS.

With Illustrations.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages make no pretension to a detailed history of the military operations of the Kaffir War. Written during leisure hours, in a lonely fort, or by the camp fire after the fatigues of the day, and mainly embracing the movements of one Division only—often of a Single Brigade or Corps—they attempt merely to convey a general idea of the country, and of the scenes and passing events of the Campaign. Should any comrade who shared its dangers and hardships peruse this account, it is hoped he will also share the feeling which first prompted the Author to record them in the Field and now to present the narrative to the public—

"Hæc olim meminisse juvabit."

Largs, November, 1853.

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CAMPAIGNING IN KAFFIRLAND.

CHAPTER I.

ORDERED TO THE CAPE—VOYAGE OUT.

THE service companies of the 74th Highlanders were under orders to sail from Cork for Gibraltar early in March, 1851. Our heavy baggage had already been sent by a sailing vessel to anticipate our arrival, H.M.S.S. "Vulcan" lay at Queenstown ready to take us on board, and the all-engrossing topics were the cork-woods of Andalusia, yachting in the Bay of Algesiras, or the chances of future quarters among the olive-groves of Corfu; when, in consequence of tidings received by government of the serious aspect of affairs in British Kaffraria, and the urgent demands of Sir H. Smith for fresh troops, our orders were suddenly countermanded, and, at three days' notice, we were steaming out of harbour for the seat of the Kaffir war.

We weighed anchor on a bright Sunday morning, March 16th, after a hasty scramble in the short time left us to lay in stores for the additional length of voyage, and get an outfit of rifles, pistols, saddles, and camp equipage;

with a few shirts, boots, and other articles for the use of the outer man, absolutely necessary to supply the loss of our unlucky baggage, by that time some hundreds of miles away in a different direction. No friends or relatives accompanied us on embarkation to say farewell; no pressing of hands or waving handkerchiefs. Lounging groups of Sunday-dressed sailors smoked and looked on in indifference; the bells rang out merrily, and the church-going crowds wended their way along the quiet sunny streets as usual.

The sister service, however, bade us a hearty farewell; having got steam up, and sails set, in less than forty minutes after the Admiral's signal, three-times-three lusty cheers burst from the manned yards and rigging of the "Ajax" and "Hogue," as we swept swiftly past, which were returned with such right good will, that we made but a very hoarse return to a last parting cheer from the forts at the mouth of the harbour.

The church bells softened and died away in the distance; streets, villas, and shipping grew indistinct; the fast-receding shores dwindled to a narrow strip; the long blue undulating line sank below the horizon; and we were fairly standing out to sea.

We steamed away, eat and drank, and preached to the fishes occasionally, as the breeze freshened rather disagreeably; until, on entering the Bay of Biscay, it began to blow in hard earnest, and by the fourth day had risen to a furious gale; mountains of waves reaching often to the yard-arms, and squalls coming on so suddenly, as to cause serious fears lest the masts should go overboard. At last it blew a perfect hurricane, with such a tremendous sea running as I had never witnessed in crossing the Atlantic before. In the height of the howling din and confusion, the tiller ropes broke, and were righted, after some time, with great difficulty. All

night the violence of the storm was unabated; the sea washed the decks every other wave; the tiller ropes again gave way, and once more we were drifting before the tempest. It was impossible to stay below in such a state of peril and uncertainty, and all the officers assembled on deck. The roaring of the wind through the rigging was so deafening, that we could not make ourselves heard, and all stood in silence watching the storm. One of the sailors aloft, whose perilous position we had been remarking, was jerked off the main-topsail yard-arm, and falling on the deck with a fearful crash, was killed on the spot. The foretop-mast was sprung, and immediately afterwards the mess-room ports were stove in, and floods of water poured through, and surged from side to side of the cabin with the heavy rolling, breaking over the table at every lurch. By the glimmer of a single lamp, officers and men hazarded neck and limbs in desperate attempts to secure, and lash together, the large hampers, chests, and heavy casks of sea-stores, which were dashed violently up and down the state-room.

After seeing all secured, and making a meal of biscuit and salt beef as we stood, bare-legged and soaked to the skin, we waded to our flooded berths, and turned in for the night, though the uproar was so terrific that it was impossible to sleep. In the midst of the din, came another astounding crash of barrels and chests broken loose; some bursting through the cabin doors as if they had been chip. Officers and men, dressed and undressed, turned out, and all were again at work lashing and making fast.

In the morning, the jolly-boat, weighing about a couple of tons, was found high above the davits, blown against the rigging, and a valuable charger of the Colonel's killed. All this time, the wind was dead on the north

coast of Spain, and we were obliged to wear ship constantly, driving about between Ushant and Scilly, till at the end of eight days we had the peculiar satisfaction of finding ourselves a trifle nearer England than on the first.

"Post nubila Phœbus." After the black and angry Bay of Biscay, the sunny tropics. The gale moderated, and by the 6th of April we had entered the torrid zone; awnings were spread on deck, and the band played in the evenings, which closed with the most gorgeous sunsets. The only land seen since leaving port, was St. Antonio, one of the Cape de Verde islands, about twenty miles off, which we sighted as the setting sun lit up its rugged sides with the richest tints of purple and gold.

On the 16th we crossed the Line, where, with grave circumstance and ceremony, the uninitiated were made freemasons by Neptune and his court in person, after being well lathered with pipe-clay and mops, shaved with three-feet razors, soundly ducked, and afterwards rinsed by liberal applications of the fire-engine hose and water-buckets. On reaching the southerly "trades" we were right glad to get rid of the stifling heat, and clanking of the engine, and spread canvass once more.

A succession of tropical calms, in which we were nearly roasted; and tropical showers, in which we were as nearly drowned, ensued. The beautiful "Southern-cross," "Centaur," and other, to us new, constellations, now shone out nightly with surpassing brilliancy; and bonetas, sharks, dolphins, Cape-pigeons, and albatrosses, with flying-fish innumerable, played around the ship day after day; some of the latter gratifying our curiosity by a visit through the ports.

After a monotonous voyage of more than seven weeks, we, one fine evening, sighted what the landsmen took to be a hazy bank of cloud in the extreme horizon, but

the sailors declared most positively to be land, with so many and extraordinary maledictions on themselves and personal property generally, that they ought to have felt considerably relieved when daylight the following morning put it beyond a doubt. Long before the hour of breakfast, our usual meet, every one was on deck gazing at the distant mountains and bold headlands of the Cape, which rapidly grew more distinct as we approached them with a fresh breeze in our favour, a magnificent sea running mountains high. Late in the day the scattered houses became visible along the welcome shore, and we entered Simon's Bay.

The little town—a group of flat-roofed white and yellow houses, with Venetian shutters and wide verandahs—is prettily situated at the foot of a mountain, fringed with bushes. American aloes and cactus form luxuriant hedges round the gardens, and flourish to an immense size; picturesque groups of swarthy Malays, in huge beehive-shaped hats, or red and yellow bandanas, gazed at us from the shore, or pulled alongside, vociferating in Dutch, and offering melons, pumpkins, eggs, and fruit, for sale.

Next day we went ashore, while the women and children were being disembarked to remain behind at Cape Town, and the rest of our camp equipage was got on board, and took advantage of the opportunity to make a rapid survey of the immediate neighbourhood, and stretch our legs after nearly two months imprisonment on board ship. As we strolled along the street we were much struck with the skill and ease with which the native Africanders drove their waggons, eight and ten in hand, full trot round the most difficult corners, an assistant wielding an enormous whip with both hands; and during our rambles were delighted to find the most exquisite specimens of our greenhouse *ericas* wild on the

mountain sides. The evening was warm and lovely, and the perfume of the creepers and flowering trees most delicious, as we walked in the bright moonlight; not a sound was heard but the rippling of the waves and the shrill cry of the cicada, and we very reluctantly left the refreshing repose of the quiet shore to go on board again.

The following morning, at a signal from the Commodore, we steamed out of the harbour, and shaped our course for Algoa Bay, a run of about three hundred miles, along a wild, and almost uninhabited coast.

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY ON ARRIVAL.

On arriving in Simon's Bay our first anxiety, of course, was to learn the latest tidings from the seat of war, which fully confirmed the unfavourable intelligence that had led to our sudden change of destination. The natives were in open rebellion, plundering the frontier farms, attacking post after post, and committing the most deliberate outrages and murders; and all the efforts of Sir Harry Smith to check them were comparatively ineffectual without fresh reinforcements, which he was now anxiously expecting.

It was at last but too evident, even to the most sanguine advocates of peace, that all hopes of such a desirable consummation being permanently effected in the colony were at end, so far as depended on any promises or treaties of the faithless Kaffirs. The experiment had been fairly tried again and again, and had as often failed. Never had there been such encouragement to hope for ultimate success as in the decided improvement and progress effected during the few years which had elapsed since the last war, after the conferences of December 24, 1847, and January 7, 1848, at King William's Town.

At the conclusion of that war it was found absolutely necessary, for the future safety and peace of the colony,

to extend the frontier line of our possessions to the Great Kei River, including the large district named British Kaffraria, which, with the lately "Ceded Territory," were declared to be forfeited by the vanquished Kaffirs, as the penalty of their rebellion. In point of fact, however, they were left in possession of the country, each tribe, with their respective chiefs, being assigned to different districts, the whole under a system of government by local magistrates or commissioners, who were again subordinate to Colonel Mackinnon, the Commandant and Chief Commissioner at King William's Town. The condition on which they were allowed to retain occupation of these districts was that of declaring allegiance to the Crown, with which both Chiefs and people at once complied; and, in addition to this, and in accordance with their own laws, each Chief was made responsible for any cattle or other robberies, the spoor of which could be traced to his kraal, he having to pay the full value, and follow up the spoor as best he could. The result was, that as there could thus be no receivers, there were soon few thieves, and property became comparatively secure, order being further enforced and preserved by a body of 400 Kaffir police, regularly drilled and equipped. The blessings of order and an equitable administration of justice inspired a confidence which was gradually felt by the people to be far preferable to the arbitrary and capricious rule of their chiefs, supported as it was by the grossest superstitions and impostures; and, besides this, efforts were made to improve their moral condition, every encouragement being given to missionary exertions, and the opening of schools and places of worship, with abundant success.

Admirable however as was Sir H. Smith's system, and also its working,—for, as was remarked, nothing

could be more promising than the state of the country up to the autumn of 1850,—an element was at work, the importance of which had not been duly estimated, and to which may undoubtedly be traced the origin of the subsequent war. The chiefs found their power and influence melting daily before the advance of civilization, the settled habits of peace, and the irresistible superiority of a just and duly administered government. Naturally jealous of their hereditary power, they felt it would soon be superseded; and Sandilli, their Paramount Chief, and an accomplished Kaffir diplomatist, availing himself of this state of feeling, visited all the several chiefs, and urged on them the necessity of a last struggle for their waning independence, instigating them to use every means to spread disaffection among their people. To further his views he enlisted the services of Umlanjeni, one of their *Witch-doctors* and prophets, in whose predictions, the most absurd and preposterous, the Kaffirs placed superstitious faith. His influence was extraordinary, and spread like wildfire among them, and the spirit of disaffection was once more deeply at work. Secret and active emissaries were sent far and wide to the Kaffirs located on the different farms in the service of colonists, with orders to desert their employers, which they promptly obeyed, absconding without warning, and in many instances leaving their property and wages behind.

At length, in spite of the reluctance of the authorities to believe in any hostile intentions on the part of the enemy, the truth of such suspicions became so apparent, that intelligence of the unsettled state of affairs, and an expected movement, was despatched to Sir Harry Smith at Cape Town. He suddenly appeared on the spot, and immediately commenced personal inquiries, and the now thoroughly alarmed colonists presented an address urging the real remedy for the apprehended dis-

turbances,—viz., the complete deposition of the chiefs from power, by depriving them of all independent authority. In absence, however, of any "direct evidence" that they were engaged in plotting an attack, and persuaded by their specious promises and affected submission, Sir H. Smith, in his reply of October 24, 1850, said, "that reports throughout British Kaffraria were most satisfactory, the chiefs were astounded at his sudden arrival, and he hoped to arrest some of the Kaffirs who had spread the alarming reports."

His prompt and energetic appearance, though without any troops whatever, alone averted an immediate outbreak, and at a great assembly of the Chiefs at King William's Town they swore allegiance to the government, ratifying it by kissing the "stick of peace." The crafty Sandilli however refused to attend, and for his contumacy was shortly after deposed by proclamation, and on the 18th of November the Governor, after endeavouring to reassure the frontier settlers, and induce them to return to their farms, departed for Cape Town in the hopes that all would remain tranquil.

But a Commission appointed by the Governor to proceed to the country of Hermanus to investigate the numerous complaints of depredations, forwarded to Cape Town such an alarming account of the critical state of affairs that his Excellency immediately started in the "Hermes," and within less than a month from his leaving it, was again on the Frontier, landing at Buffalo mouth with the 73rd regiment and a detachment of artillery. A proclamation was at once issued for the establishment of a police, and the enrolment of a corps of volunteers for self-defence, so as to leave the whole of the military at liberty for operations.

The Kaffirs at this time, according to returns, possessed upwards of 3000 stand of arms, six million rounds

of ball cartridge, and half a million assegais, with ample means of supply; a trade in gunpowder and arms having long been carried on openly and almost without restriction. Their fanatical prophet, Umlanjeni, now issued the command to "Slay and eat," which, as the usual food of the Kaffirs in time of peace is corn, roots, and sour milk, is the conventional mode with them of commencing a war, the stimulus of animal food being only resorted to, to excite their energies on such occasions; their warlike passions fairly aroused, farms were attacked in every direction, houses plundered and burned, and the police effectually resisted in their attempts to enforce the restitution of stolen cattle.

A panic spread along the Frontier, and the farmers abandoned their lands in numbers, moving with all their flocks and herds into the interior, their losses being greatly aggravated by the swarms of locusts which devoured everything before them, leaving the cattle to perish for want of pasture. Those who had the courage, or were compelled by necessity to remain, formed themselves into *laagers* of ten or twelve families, regularly fortifying and provisioning themselves within some of the more tenable homesteads, round which they collected their flocks.

The Commander-in-chief, on the 16th December, marched all the troops in Albany and British Kaffraria to the Amatola mountains, the object of which was to make such a demonstration as might overawe the Gaikas, without resorting to force, which was to be carefully avoided. The troops consisted of the 6th, 73rd, and 91st regiments, and the Cape Mounted Rifles, together, about 1500 strong, with the two divisions of Kaffir police. The right wing, under Lieut.-Col. Eyre, 73rd, was posted on the Kabousie Neck, accompanied by the Chief Toise; the centre column, under Col. Mackinnon, held Fort Cox,

the head-quarters of his Excellency; and Col. Somerset, in command of the left wing, moved on Fort Hare.

On the 19th a great meeting of all the Gaika tribes and chiefs was held at Fort Cox, when above 3000 assembled, and were addressed by the Governor on the conduct of Sandilli, who, with his half-brother Anta, was outlawed, and large rewards offered for their apprehension. His Excellency impressed on them his determination to preserve order, and, if needful, to enforce it by the troops; but they had, no doubt, already fully resolved on war, and must have felt pretty confident in the strength of their position and forces, for on his threatening them that, in case of necessity, he could bring ships full of troops to the Buffalo mouth, he was significantly asked, "If he had any ships that could sail up the Amatolas?"

A few days later their hostile intentions were put beyond a doubt. A patrol of 580 strong, under Colonel Mackinnon, had been ordered out to the Keiskamma Hoek, where Sandilli was supposed to be concealed, in the expectation that he would surrender or fly, as the Governor was led to believe. They marched from Fort Cox on the 24th, with orders to molest no one, and were treated in the most friendly manner by the Kaffirs until they had reached a narrow, rocky gorge of the Keiskamma, where they could only proceed in single file, when a fire was suddenly opened on the column of infantry, after the Kaffir Police and Cape Mounted Rifles had been suffered to pass. The fire was most resolutely maintained for some time, and the ground was so well chosen for the attack, that the troops could not dislodge the Kaffirs until they had suffered a considerable loss, the mounted police and Cape corps being unavailable. Assistant-Surgeon Stuart, and eleven men, were killed, with two officers and seven privates wounded. The loss of the enemy was considerable.

There is no doubt that the troops were purposely led into this ambuscade by the Kaffir police, as they were themselves not only allowed to pass unmolested during the whole affair, but the next day a body of 365 deserted to the enemy, taking their wives, cattle, equipments, and ammunition, and, what was more annoying, the discipline and knowledge of our military manœuvres, both infantry and cavalry, which they had acquired from a long course of active training, at an expense, to the colony alone, of £11,000 annually. Their defection was speedily followed by that of others. This day (Christmas day) seems to have been agreed on as the commencement of a general outbreak. Martial law had been proclaimed by the governor, in consequence of the events of the day before. A party of the 45th regiment, while escorting waggons to King William's Town, was surprised on the Debe Neck, and overpowered, before they could form for defence, by a large body of Kaffirs, who barbarously murdered the whole party, a sergeant and fourteen privates, leaving their bodies on the ground, where they were found by Colonel Mackinnon's patrol, with their throats cut from ear to ear, and horribly mutilated, which was afterwards discovered to have been perpetrated before death. This party had formed a portion of the handful of troops at Fort White, and the Kaffirs at once proceeded to attack the weakened garrison, but were gallantly repulsed with loss.

Simultaneously with these attacks they consummated their cowardly treachery by a general and concerted massacre at all the military villages, under circumstances of the most atrocious and cold-blooded ferocity. These military settlers were discharged soldiers, who had grants of land assigned to them, with assistance from government on a liberal scale to start them in their farms, the condition of tenure being, that they should be ready at

any time to turn out for the defence of the country, receiving good pay and allowances while on service. A number of prosperous little villages thus sprang up, and the settlers lived on the most friendly terms with the neighbouring Kaffirs, constantly entertaining them as their guests, and employing many on their farms. Of their hospitality the Kaffirs treacherously availed themselves to the full, to allay suspicion and prepare the way for the intended massacre. Hurried orders to prepare themselves for the worst had but just arrived in consequence of the attack at Keiskamma Hoek, on the previous day, when the Kaffirs rose at a signal, and massacred the inhabitants, whose guests many of them had just been; sharing their Christmas dinner. The women were stripped, and escaped with difficulty, and the houses were burned to the ground. Johannesberg, Woburn, and Auckland, among others, were thus entirely destroyed, every man at the latter being killed.

The Governor himself was next hemmed in by the enemy at Fort Cox; a gallant attempt to open a communication with him was made by Colonel Somerset, with a party of the 91st regiment and Cape Mounted Rifles, but they were compelled to abandon it, being surrounded by overwhelming numbers of the enemy; and, in a most desperate hand-to-hand fight, two gallant officers, and twenty privates, of the 91st, were killed, and many wounded. Their loss, however, was amply avenged, some 200 of the enemy being left dead on the field.

On the 31st, Sir H. Smith, with a party of Cape corps, sallied from Fort Cox, and after dashing through the enemy for twelve miles, succeeded in reaching King William's Town. He immediately issued a proclamation, calling on the colonists to rise *en masse*, and assist the troops to expel and exterminate the Gaikas from the Amatolas, at all hazards.

The prospects of the new year opened gloomily enough; the attacks and depredations of the enemy became daily more general and audacious. The farmers entirely abandoned the country, and the roads were almost impassable from the quantity of stock which was driven in. The Gaikas were joined by the T'slambies and Tambookies, mustering not less than 15,000 strong; and Kreli, the most influential chief, was under suspicion, and his defection greatly dreaded, as he could bring a force of at least 10,000 men into the field.

At this conjuncture the ill-concealed spirit of disaffection, which had long been at work, broke out among the Hottentots of the London Missionary Station, at the Kat River, for years a hotbed of discontent and rebellion; though actually fed and clothed at an enormous expense by the government, and put in free possession of a most beautiful and fertile district, taken by us from the Kaffirs, and given to them unconditionally, yet these people were taught to believe themselves injured, robbed, and oppressed by those to whom they owed everything; and now leagued themselves with Sandilli and his followers.

The missionary settlements of Shiloh and Theopolis quickly followed their example, and the so-called Christianized Hottentots were soon among the foremost of the rebels. At Shiloh they actually garrisoned and held their chapel for some time against their Burgher forces, though they had but shortly before received the sacrament and sworn solemn allegiance. Afterwards, being joined by a party of Tambookies and Kat River rebels, they made a daring attack on Whittlesea.

As soon as Sir H. Smith reached King William's Town, he despatched an urgent demand to Cape Town for all available troops, and another appeal was made to the Burghers.

While the Governor was awaiting the collection of these reinforcements, the Kaffirs, emboldened by the delay, sent an audacious challenge to our troops to fight, backed by a body of 500 men, who, however, were signally worsted by a party of Cape corps, and Fingoes.

As soon as the Commander-in-chief had somewhat organized his forces, Colonel Mackinnon was despatched, on the 30th of January, to throw supplies into Fort Cox and Fort White, and, on the 13th of February, marched with a patrol to the relief of Fort Hare, in all of which he was successful, though after severe conflicts with the enemy.

By this time the Kaffirs had overrun the whole country, down even as far as Graham's Town and the Addo Bush, and, in every direction, were perpetrating the most violent outrages on life and property, to the utter dismay and consternation of the inhabitants; and Sir H. Smith, at the request of the English and Dutch churches, proclaimed a solemn day of humiliation on the 7th February, which was religiously observed.

Fort Armstrong, which the rebels had seized, was stormed on the 23rd of February, and taken by Major-General Somerset; and other engagements took place with the same success, especially during patrols of a force under Colonel Mackinnon.

In the beginning of March the Cape Mounted Rifles followed the example of the Kat River rebels, a party of them deserting from head-quarters, with all their arms and accoutrements; and further desertions were only checked by the promptness of the Governor, who at once paraded the regiment, and disarmed the coloured men.

On the 18th the Commander-in-chief took the field in person, and marched to Fort Hare, which was in imminent danger of an attack for the rescue of prisoners and the plunder of ammunition. By a masterly movement

this was frustrated, and the enemy utterly routed with considerable loss. After this his Excellency pushed on with a rapidity which astonished the Kaffirs, and marched on Forts Cox and White; during which another spirited engagement took place, the enemy being again defeated, numbers of them killed, and above 1000 head of stolen cattle retaken.

In consequence of an atrocious case of roasting three men alive at the notorious Kat River, General Somerset, with a strong patrol, marched to the Mancazana River, where they were attacked by the enemy, who were completely defeated. Major Wilmot, R.A., also on a patrol into the Chief Seyolo's country, encountered and defeated them; inflicting severe loss, driving Seyolo out, and destroying their kraals and stores. Colonel Mackinnon and Captain Tylden had, by the latest intelligence, successfully opposed the enemy in other parts of the country, and Marassa's people; but the troops were evidently inadequate, in point of numbers, to the emergency, and the vast extent of the line of operations; and the greatest anxiety was felt, which was increased by the intelligence of Kreli's having engaged in actual hostilities, in conjunction with the Tambookies and Basutas.

Such, briefly, was the state of affairs when we left Simon's Bay; and it was with feelings of some excitement that we looked forward to joining the gallant little army, which as anxiously expected our arrival.

CHAPTER III.

LANDING—MARCH UP THE COUNTRY—FIRST BRUSH WITH THE REBELS.

ON the fourth day after leaving Simon's Town, we dropped anchor in Algoa Bay, opposite the town of Port Elizabeth, which, though rather a dull-looking place at first sight, with its background of bare sand-hills, improved on better acquaintance.

Here the troops were transferred to large boats, from which again, one by one, we were all carried ashore, through a tremendous surf, sitting astride on the shoulders of naked Fingoes; tall, athletic fellows, adorned with armlets and necklaces of brass and beads, and wearing pendant in front, a most grotesque and sometimes elaborate ornament, which as much astonished our men, as it excited their merriment. Our landing on the 16th of the month was an odd coincidence, as we had sailed from Cork on the 16th of March, and crossed the line on the 16th of April.

Towards evening the whole of the troops were landed. and our tents pitched on the top of the bare bleak hill behind the town.

Most of the bedding having got thoroughly soaked in passing through the surf, many of us slept in our plaids on the bare ground, which some of the youngsters rather preferred, as a hardy soldier-like sort of thing.

Here we were detained three days, unable to procure

sufficient oxen for the baggage waggons, as in consequence of a long drought and scarcity of pasture the cattle had died off in hundreds, those that survived being in such a miserable plight that two could with difficulty do the work of one in ordinary condition.

The camp was besieged from morning to night by crowds of various races, Africanders, Hottentots, Malays, and Fingoes, as different in costume as in complexion; some gaily dressed in startling cottons, with gaudy *douks* or bandanas on their woolly heads; others with large brass skewers stuck Chinese fashion through their long black hair; some wrapped in a simple cowhide, or dirty blanket; and many with little encumbrance beyond their brass and copper ornaments, or the naked little niggers tied on their backs. Horses of all ages and descriptions, from unbroken colts to broken-down screws, and of all colours, from a "voss" to a "blue schimmel," were paraded for sale, and trotted up and down, spurred, "jambokked," and gingered all day long. As every officer required two animals, one for riding and another for his packsaddle, the demand greatly increased the already high prices, and we had to pay at least double their ordinary value.

On the fourth day after landing, tents were struck at eight in the morning, and we marched through the long straggling street of Port Elizabeth, accompanied for some distance out of the town by a motley crowd, screaming and dancing round the band. A long train of about thirty lumbering waggons, each drawn by ten or fourteen of the largest bullocks we had ever seen; carrying immense and most inconvenient-looking horns, brought up the rear. Naked little "voorloupiers"* led the teams, which were driven by dwarf Hottentots flou-

* Foreleaders.

rishing enormous bamboo whips eighteen or twenty feet in length, the incessant cracking of which was like the report of so many pistols, as they descended with volleys of Dutch oaths on the backs of the unfortunate oxen answering to the names of Schwartlande, Bluberg, or Scotlande.

The country was most monotonous, and but for such features of novelty as strange shrubs and plants presented, uninteresting enough, being little more than a succession of bare sandy flats, and low hills sprinkled with bush, here and there a large salt-pan, and occasionally clumps of aloes and elephant tree,* a large bush with round fleshy leaves of an agreeable acid, the favourite food of the elephant, which only a few years back inhabited the whole of this district. The sun was scorching hot; clouds of fine sand, raised by the moving column, floated round, filling eyes and mouth; and altogether the men (judging from their remarks) appeared to entertain a very indifferent opinion of Africa.

After fourteen miles we came to the Zwartkop river, and crossing the *drift* or ford, encamped among the scattered mimosas, bristling with gigantic white thorns, on a piece of short, smooth grass, at the foot of a hill, completely covered with aloes, drawing up the waggons in line, and *knee-haltering* the horses, which were turned loose to feed with the oxen till dark.

A brilliant moon rose early, and we sat round a cheerful camp-fire, smoking our first pipe in what might be called the bush; the long lines of tents and white-topped waggons peeped from among the dark trees, bright fires encircled by red coats shone everywhere; the oxen tied to the yokes lay grouped together, the horses stood sleeping, the Hottentots scraped their fiddles and

* Asterocarpus, typicus.

screeched under their waggons, and in the distance the sentinels paced up and down their beat; while above the general hum, rose every now and then the loud laugh and merry song, finishing occasionally with the mournful howl of a jackal.

Next morning, after ascending the steep winding road cut through a forest of large African aloes, we marched to Coega River, where, learning that there was no water to be had for the next twenty miles, we were obliged, on account of the oxen, to halt for the day. We had good sport at buck-shooting, and I got a beautiful tiger's skin from a native who had but just stripped it from the carcass of its late owner.

Owing to the general reluctance that had hitherto been displayed to turning out of bed in the middle of the night to march, we were aroused the following morning at one o'clock, by the effectual but not very agreeable mode, of pulling down the tents at the sound of a bugle, without the ceremony of asking those within whether they were prepared for a public appearance.

It was still bright moonlight when we *fell in*, and so bitterly cold that our half-frozen fingers and toes had hardly recovered their natural warmth when we halted for breakfast, after a five-miles walk in rear of the snail-paced waggons.

After two or three hours' grazing, the oxen were inspanned, and our march continued for fifteen miles through dense bush; the laborious track ankle deep in soft sand, and so narrow in places that the waggons could barely brush through, the men being obliged to march in file. The sun was by this time intensely hot, and we were without a drop of water to moisten our lips, which were swollen and blistered by the heat. Towards noon we came to a "poort," or natural hollow between high banks covered with aloe and dwarf eu-

phorbia, the sand thickly incrusted with salt. The reflected heat of the sun was intolerable; not a breath of air was stirring; all around was still as death, and the atmosphere so stifling that many of the men were on the point of fainting, though a few hours before benumbed with cold. Shortly we came to a muddy stagnant pool, literally hot from the noontide sun: but so great were the sufferings of the troops, that they rushed almost into it, throwing themselves down by sections on the miry banks, and greedily drinking the fetid green water.

In the afternoon we pitched our tents on a burning plain; and never did I enjoy anything so much as a bathe that evening in the gloomy crocodile-suggesting-stream, called Sunday River, whose sluggish water, overhung by deep forest, scarcely moved the twigs that dipped into it. After this refresher, we all dined together at the little lonely inn; the rooms of which were covered, from the ceiling to the floor, with the skins of lions and tigers; shot, as the host assured us, "within sight of the house." During the night, my tent pole, which had already shown rickety symptoms, gave way from the overstraining of the canvass, tightened by the dew, and down came the wet tent on our faces, nearly smothering C——n, my companion in misfortune. We cut an odd figure in the moonlight, in our shirts and red woollen caps, creeping from under the fallen tent, and in that airy costume clearing away the wreck, turning in again between our blankets on the open plain; where, at the risk of being walked over by orderly officers and stray horses, we slept soundly until *réveillé*, when awaking, I found every article of clothing thoroughly saturated with dew; spite of which, it was impossible to resist laughing at the autumnal appearance of my

comrade, whose nightcap, hair, and eyebrows were heavily loaded with sparkling dewdrops.

After about an hour's marching, the sun rose, and we met a returning party of traders going down to the Bay with several waggon-loads of skins, escorted by about a score of naked Fingoes. In the forenoon we arrived at Commando Kraal, where was an encampment of Fingoe Levies, stationed at the entrance of the dangerous Addo-bush, in which, a short time previously, one or two rencounters with the Kaffirs had taken place. A small party of them joined us, armed with flint-locks and assegais, and dressed in the most grotesque manner possible.

This dense and beautiful bush extends for miles on every side; its solitary depths impassable except to Kaffirs and wild beasts, hundreds of which latter roam through it undisturbed. Tigers, hyænas, wild-cats, and jackals abound; and buffaloes and elephants are still occasionally seen, of which we had convincing evidence in the fresh spoor of three of the latter, whose enormous foot-prints were distinctly visible, and made one's heart beat with excitement at the idea of being in a country where such noble beasts roamed wild and unrestrained. The waggon track was in many parts very beautiful, sometimes so narrow that the overhanging trees, covered with festoons of grey pendant lichen, met above it; in others, opening out into smooth green lawn-like patches, surrounded by brilliantly flowered trees and shrubs (as the crimson boerboon,* and the yellow mimosa, with its gigantic milkwhite thorns); everywhere clusters of the beautiful pale blue plumbago, with numberless aloes and occasional euphorbias, rising to the height of thirty feet; the underwood filled with the "stapelia," "gasteria," and other varieties of

* Schotia speciosa.

cactus. The heat of the sun was again most oppressive, shut in as we were between walls of bush, so close, that not a breath of air found its way through. The oxen were so completely done up, that they could scarcely draw the heavily-laden waggons through the deep sand, and numbers fell, to die on the roadside, or were abandoned a prey to the wild beasts and vultures.

Halting for half an hour to rest thecattle at the top of a heavy hill, a lovely view presented itself: in the foreground, the road we had just passed, winding down into the bush below; beyond that, a vast extent of flat, thickly-wooded country; and far off, a fine chain of rugged mountains, mellowed by the purple atmosphere of the distance, into a mistlike softness.

Late in the day, we entered on an extensive grassy plain, affording a grateful relief to the eye, after the close smothering road through the bush. Three distant specks on the vast level proved, when we came up, to be as many waggons outspanned by a large "vley" or pool of water; their owners, a company of traders, cooking supper and smoking their pipes, looked a picture of ease and comfort, strongly contrasted with our dusty and way worn appearance. We saw several "duyker-bok," and encamped at sunset, driving in our last tent-pegs by the light of a beautiful moon.

Across this plain, thinly covered with brown burnt-up grass, we marched the following day, for twelve miles, in clouds of fine sand, borne along by a hot wind that rendered it disagreeable and wearying in the extreme; and without seeing anything to enliven or interest, excepting a fine secretary bird and a number of tortoises; two large *cobra capellas* were killed, one of which bit a pet terrier-dog, that immediately began howling and barking, running round and round, falling down and foaming at the mouth. Its body swelled out

enormously, and it soon afterwards died. We encamped for the night at Bushman's River, where we were only able to get a little thick stagnant water of the colour and consistence of a dose of rhubarb, and were on the road again by four, A.M.; outspanning after five miles for breakfast, by a pool of fresh water, which was most welcome, after having had nothing to drink for the last twenty-four hours but the single draught of liquid mud. While searching in the thicket for dry firewood, we came upon a colony of monkies, which highly resented our intrusion, chattering and gesticulating in the most angry manner.

Towards mid-day we came in sight of a small settlement, with the exception of the solitary inn, the first sign of human habitation we had seen for four days. The houses, seven in number, standing in the open plain, were enclosed by stockades, and barricaded with boxes, bags, chests and barrels, filled with sand, and piled up against the doors and windows; the neat little English church, about which we found the few inhabitants just assembling for divine service (it being Sunday,) was loopholed, and barricaded within by furniture of all descriptions, an indication of our approach to the neighbourhood of the disturbed districts.

Our route the following day lay for some miles through an uninteresting succession of low, undulating grassy hills, totally devoid of tree or bush, but thickly covered with enormous ant hills, many of them four feet high, neatly built, rounded, and baked as hard as stone.

At Assegai Bush we were met by a convoy of twenty additional waggons, sent from Graham's Town, to lighten our own, and enable us to proceed with greater dispatch. They were escorted by about fifty Fingoe Levies, armed as usual, with guns and assegais; their

felt hats ornamented with the feathers of the Kaffir crane, the ostrich, vink, and lorie, jackall's brushes, or strips of tiger skin; and wearing suspended from the waist by steel chains of their own manufacture, bags or purses, called *daghasacs*, ingeniously made without a seam, of the entire skin of the wild cat, dossie, or monkey (the opening at the neck being the only one, through which the whole of the flesh and bone is removed); in these they carry their pipes and tobacco, the *iquaka* or snuff box (made of a small gourd, with bead ornaments, and horn or metal spoons attached, similar to those in use in the Highlands); with their flint and steel, charms, and other odds and ends.

Thus relieved, the oxen jogged cheerily on, and the march was prolonged several hours beyond our usual distance. At sunset, on leading our horses to drink at a small vley, near the edge of the bush, we found the fresh spoor of a tiger, the prints of his massive feet being quite plain in the mud. After night-fall we crept more slowly on; the waggons jolting and creaking heavily along the rough road, bumping up against the huge stones, and diving into the deep gullies, or "sluits," with which it abounded. At last we halted, and groping about in the dark, tumbling into jackall's holes and running into prickly bushes, managed to pitch our tents on the worst piece of ground imaginable; and, as it was out of the question to find wood, we gave up the idea of fires; though it had already begun to rain; and turned in, hoping to sleep soundly after a thirty miles march. In this we were however disappointed, for a great number of the tents blew down during the night, in a high wind, that tore up the tent pegs from the soft ground, and left us exposed to the pitiless pelting of the storm.

But all things have an end, and next morning the sun shone out as brightly as ever; and the face of the country looked fresher and greener than before. Our road led for some miles through a fine *poort*, or glen; shut in by high bold rocky hills, with prickly-pear, scarlet and lilac geraniums, and African aloes in full flower, growing in every nook and crevice; the steep road winding by the course of a mountain stream, along which grew hundreds of the large white arum,* orange-coloured salvias, and a host of other flowers; whilst chattering flocks of the bright golden green spreuw,† honey-birds and orioles flitted among the tall jungle, and flew from branch to branch.

After toiling some hours up a steep and most execrable road, we came in sight of Graham's Town, with the size, situation, and general appearance of which, we were somewhat disappointed. It is a straggling place, situated in the midst of a bare piece of country, surrounded by equally bare hills. We marched through the town, to Fort England, and pitched our tents on the turf-covered square, in front of the officers' quarters—detached cottages, with small gardens, enclosed by hedges of prickly-pear. Here we remained two or three days, preparing for the field, and awaiting orders from General Somerset, to whose division we were attached. Our bonnets and plaids were replaced by a costume more suitable for the bush—viz., a short dark canvas blouse; in addition to which feldt-schoen, and lighter pouches, made of untanned leather, were issued to the men, and broad leather peaks fixed to their forage caps, forming as light and serviceable a head dress as possible. We further provided ourselves with pack-horses, pack-saddles, patrol

* Calla Ethiopica. † Lamproternis nitens

tents, camp kettles, saddle-bags, black servants, and a hundred other necessaries.

On Monday morning, just as the waggons were loaded, and we were on the point of marching out of the place, an express arrived from the General, countermanding the move, in consequence of information he had received of an insurrection among the Hottentots of Theopolis, a station of the London Missionary Society, and the common focus of the rebels of the district. About seventy Hottentots with their wives and families resided there, and amongst them several Fingoes. The former having been joined the previous day by other rebels and Cape Corps deserters, formed their plans and proceeded to carry them into effect next morning at day break, by murdering in cold blood the loyal and unsuspecting Fingoes, whom they shot down as they were leaving their huts.

To chastise and disperse these rebels and murderers was the object of our suddenly altered destination; and as they had taken up a strong position at Theopolis, it was on that point the General now concentrated all his available force. Two companies of the 74th were ordered to parade immediately in light marching order (*i. e.*, carrying their blankets on their backs, and leaving their tents behind), and accompanied by guides, the Albany Rangers and some Levies, marched at once for the scene of action. We watched them ascending the steep hills behind the barracks, until they were lost to sight, and envied them coming in for active duty. However, our time came sooner than we had hoped, for as we sat at breakfast next morning in our tents, a sudden order arrived for us to march in half-an-hour to join the former patrol. Away went breakfast things, and all was life. Knives and forks were quickly succeeded by dirks and pistols; and officers

and men were fully equipped before the appointed time. After some delay in waiting for a six-pounder field-piece, some artillerymen, and waggons of ammunition, we marched away to the sound of the old bagpipes, crossed the mountain, and descended by a very steep road into a lovely little nook or basin at its foot, where we halted to rest the oxen, after five miles of very hard work; bivouacking on the grassy banks of the Kowie, in a pretty spot glowing with African aloes and salvias, and shut in by trees on every side but the one by which we had approached, where the mountain towered above us in all its beauty. Climbing the opposite ascent, we pursued our way through bush and plain for about twenty miles, halting, some time after darkness had set in, on the edge of the Brak River, where the troops were ordered to lie down for a couple of hours' rest. Determining to make the most of the time, I threw myself down at once in my plaid, on the ground, under a snug bush, and endeavoured to snatch a little slumber; but it was so bitterly cold, and the jackalls howled in such melancholy tones, that sleep was impossible for the first hour, and I could hardly believe that my eyes had been closed for more than five minutes, when awakened by the orderly sergeant, shaking me by the shoulder to rise.

It was a pitch dark night, not a star to be seen, and we marched on, stumbling against ant-hills, and walking into deep holes of ant-bears* at almost every step, accidents well known to all who have made night marches in this country. At length we saw, at about five miles distance, and right ahead of us, the glimmering camp fires of the other part of our force, and entered their lines at the first streak of dawn, astonishing

* Ant-eaters. Echidna.

them not a little by our unexpected appearance. We learned that a slight skirmish had taken place with the rebels, from whom several waggons had been taken. Field Cornet Grey had been killed, and Commandants Woerst and Stults, with four others of the Levies, wounded.

We remained here for the next twenty-four hours, awaiting the cover of night to make our advance upon the enemy's position, from which we were about twelve miles distant. During the day, which was exceedingly warm, we refreshed ourselves by bathing in a small stream, and eating oranges in a grove close to the camp; the trees of unusual size, covered with ripe golden fruit, from their topmost branches, down to the lowest boughs, which swept the ground from their weight. Fine bananas grew among the trees, and a profuse undergrowth of waving grass everywhere; the place having been abandoned since the commencement of the war.

Late in the day the General arrived in camp with an escort of Cape Mounted Rifles, making our force about six hundred and forty men, with eight artillerymen and a field-piece. The troops were ordered to lie down to rest at an early hour, as we were to move off to the scene of attack soon after midnight; when all were to fall in quickly and quietly, and without giving any unnecessary indication of our movement. About half-past one o'clock we were turned out; and, with a strange feeling of excitement, heightened by the novelty of our silent movements, the subdued voices of officers and orderly sergeants, indistinctly seen through the gloom gliding along the motionless ranks, I took my place.

In a few minutes we moved off; the cavalry remaining behind for a couple of hours. The road we

had to traverse was most difficult, abounding for the first few miles in deep holes and innumerable ant-hills; after which, it became, if possible, worse; entering a narrow rugged descending defile, a succession of deep steps or ledges cut through a thick bush, and intersected by sluits or dry watercourses (large and deep enough, as we very soon found, to contain three or four men at once), and thickly strewn with large stones and loose rocks, over which we stumbled and fell at almost every step, five or six being frequently down at once, and often sustaining severe cuts and bruises.

The General, accompanied by the cavalry, came up just as we were descending a very steep path, down to the drift over the Kareiga, and passing us, moved on to the front. At this point, unfortunately, the forces got separated in the darkness of the night, and being unacquainted with the country, one company was completely lost in the bush; while another wandered so far out of the way as to cause great delay in commencing operations. We approached the enemy's position just as the day began to dawn, and found our advance retarded by a large barricade of newly felled trees, thrown across the narrow path at a point where the bush on either hand was perfectly impenetrable. This obstruction again delayed us a considerable time, as all were obliged to file through an opening cut through the close thorny bushes; but we got over the difficulty much more easily than was expected, and in a few minutes were formed in order for the attack, at the entrance of a fine grassy plain, perfectly circular, probably three quarters of a mile in diameter, and entirely encompassed by a belt of bush about three miles in breadth all round.

It had been originally intended to place the mounted force in position behind a stockade which they were to

reach by riding noiselessly along the inner margin of the bush; but as day was approaching there was every chance of their being discovered, consequently the plan was abandoned, and they remained with the infantry, which at once entered the enclosed plain by a narrow road, and on gaining the open space took "skirmishing order;" two companies extended, two in support, and the remainder in reserve. The Cape Corps and mounted burghers were formed on the extreme right of the skirmishers, and we advanced rapidly across the plain towards the enemy's huts, in rear of which, and under cover of the bush, the Fingoe levies had been previously placed in ambuscade.

As we advanced hundreds of quail rose so temptingly, that notwithstanding our momentary expectation of meeting very different game, we were unable to refrain from exclamations, or to resist bringing up our rifles and indulging in imaginary shots, until a few real ones from the enemy quickly reminded us of the more serious business of the day. A small party of the rebels had suddenly made their appearance from a "vlei" in front of our right wing, and were immediately engaged with the cavalry, some sharp firing taking place on both sides. The skirmishers were at once moved forward to cover them; and the next moment we found ourselves under fire for the first time, wondering that so many balls whistled around us, without hitting any one. On seeing our advance the rebels took to flight and made for the bush, closely pursued by the cavalry, but escaped down a wooded kloof, from whence for a time they attempted to keep up a scattering fire, occasionally appearing outside the cover to take a surer aim, and again dodging quickly behind the bushes to load, not always however sufficiently so, for our keen marksmen brought down several of them, and wounded others, which, with the

assistance of one or two well directed vollies, had the effect of completely silencing their fire in that quarter.

Meanwhile we were approaching the huts on our left; and seeing that their commander (a deserter, by the way, from the Cape Corps, affecting the importance of a British officer, and issuing his written orders in due form), had drawn up his men in line fronting the huts with the evident intention of contesting the ground, we rapidly "changed direction" to that flank, the skirmishers wheeling to the left in double-quick time, and the cavalry bringing their right shoulders forward and charging towards them at full gallop. The rebels became panic stricken, fired a few random shots, killing one of the Levies, and fled to that part of the bush where our Fingoe and Bechuana allies were posted, from whom they received, to their equal surprise and dismay, a volley that killed seven or eight of their number, and drove the rest back into the open space, whence they escaped by the very outlet which was to have been held by the mounted force. Had it been so occupied scarcely a man would have escaped them. As it was, the dense and extensive bush redered all pursuit hopeless. We therefore turned our attention to the capture of their ill-gotten spoil, taking 632 head of fine cattle, some horses and goats, all stolen from the neighbouring settlers, besides a large quantity of grain, and six waggons. The huts were well stocked with clothes, cooking utensils, native ornaments, and furniture, including the recognised property of the murdered Fingoes; these dwellings set on fire were speedily roaring and crackling like furnaces. In several were dogs that had been hit by our fire, and in one hut the exasperated Fingoes had found a wounded Hottentot left behind by his people. He prayed hard for mercy, but in vain, for one of them, whom the cruel massacre had deprived of a parent, blew out his brains

before any one could interfere, exclaiming: "Wena! uyabulala ubawo bam!" (You! murderer of my father!)

While searching about the place a shot was fired at us by some fellow skulking in the bush, to the edge of which we had incautiously wandered. Gordon had a narrow escape, as the ball ploughed up the ground at his feet, and covered him with the soil. The Fingoes immediately dashed in, in pursuit, making the wood ring with their yells.

From the elevated site of the smouldering village we had a fine and unexpected view of the sea at only a few miles distance, the intervening country, grassy and well wooded, being intersected by the winding Kareiga. We bivouacked for breakfast, boiling our coffee on the embers of the huts, and spreading our rations of beef and black biscuit on the trampled grass, not many yards from the corpses of those who had fallen. A few stray Kaffirs were espied stealing away through the open bush in the valley below, and though far out of range, set all the Fingoes firing away at once in the wildest manner imaginable.

After resting for about half an hour we returned by the road we had traversed the night before, which was, of course, up-hill all the way back. It was now intensely hot; and after having marched thirty-five miles the previous day, and been on foot two nights successively, we found it heavy work, nearly all being half asleep as we staggered along the burning road. I found myself several times in a state of somnambulism, starting out of sleep as I stumbled over the inequalities of the ground, wondering for the instant where I was. Thus we plodded on till late in the evening, when jaded and weary we again reached the bivouac left eighteen hours before, during seventeen of which we had never rested. The steady and soldier-like manner in which the men performed this march, so soon after landing from a long

sea voyage, deservedly elicited the commendations of the General in Orders. It was with a feeling of relief and pleasure, known only to those who have undergone the excessive fatigues of such a forced march, that we threw ourselves down to rest, and kicked the shoes off our burning feet.

It was late the following afternoon when we again halted at the Kowie River, at the foot of the mountain, and the oxen being too much exhausted to drag the waggons up, we encamped there for the night. Having neither bread nor biscuit left, we made a supper of beef and cold water, refreshing ourselves, after sleeping three nights in our clothes, by a moonlight bathe in the cold stream. Next morning all were under way at three o'clock, and before day dawned were near the top of the mountain road looking down on the fires we had left, glimmering far below in the yet dark valley. The camp at Fort England was reached in time for a somewhat late breakfast, during which we had more than enough to do between satisfying our own voracious appetites and the eager inquiries of those who had so unwillingly been left behind.

General Somerset, on his return to Graham's Town, received despatches from the Commander-in-chief of such a nature as to induce him to march us at once up the country to Fort Hare. Accordingly we struck tents next morning, though it was Sunday, and proceeded to Bothas Hill that afternoon, whence we had our first view of the lofty rugged chain of the Amatolas, gazing upon them in the blue distance, with no little interest, as our reported destination, and feeling that at last we were fairly off for Kaffirland. The view from this hill was splendid: endless chains of mountains; dark and wooded kloofs; sunny valleys, and grassy plains, dotted with mimosa; all clad in a depth and variety of colouring forming a picture as difficult to describe as to forget.

The following morning we entered the Ecca Pass, the terror of waggon-drivers and "post-riders," and notorious as the scene of many fatal ambuscades. The road winds along a deep narrow valley between high hills covered with dense thorny bush, and has a high wall of rock on the one hand, on the other a precipitous ravine, with admirable cover for Kaffirs everywhere, and is, perhaps, one of the most villanous specimens of a high road in the known world, abounding throughout its entire length with rocks of all sizes, from that of a "company's arm-chest" downwards; holes in the middle of it as deep as an ordinary horse-pond. On the one side the yawning precipices encroach on the crumbling path; while on the other some communicative driver points to overhanging crags and unapproachable cliffs, from which unsuspecting escorts and parties of horsemen are frequently fired upon by lurking bands of the enemy; with what fatal effect is evidenced by the bones and dried up hides of oxen and horses lying in the track. At a turn in the road, where only three days before a mounted express had been attacked, and four of the party wounded, we disturbed a troop of gorged vultures, which, rising from the half-devoured carcase of one of the horses, alighted on the rocks above, from the concealed crevices of which the rebels had taken aim. Within three weeks after this attack they again waylaid a like party, but with more fatal effect, two men being killed and four wounded. We were suffered to pass without molestation. The appearance of our long line, as it moved down the valley, was very striking; wild-looking Fingoes, strings of oxen and waggons, the glittering forest of bayonets, straggling Levies, pack-horses, and camp followers, winding along the hill-side, through the glowing bush, which was varied by magnificent euphorbias, rivalling forest trees in height.

Among the rocks were numbers of dossies* (a sort of rabbit, with a rat's head and monkey's hands) and some large baboons.

We emerged from the valley by a steep rough road, called Brak River Hill, and after a few miles level trek through a sandy country, sprinkled with thorn bushes, arrived at Fort Brown, a lonely quadrangular fortification, close to the Great Fish River, on the opposite bank of which we encamped for the night.

At the Koonap River, where we outspanned for a couple of hours next morning, two magnificent koodoo were seen, but they disappeared in the thick bush before any of the stalkers were within rifle range; one of them was a splendid fellow, as large as a mule, with long upright spiral horns, full three feet high.

From this the road for some distance ran along the base of a lofty range of cliffs called the Blue Krantz, an unbroken precipice of grey rock, at least 100 feet in height, and so perpendicular that a stone thrown from it would have fallen right among us; its summit fringed with aloes and overhanging trees, scarlet geranium springing from every crevice.

After crossing the river by two deep drifts, a few hundred yards apart, the diverging roads re-united at a deserted military post, destroyed by the enemy, and we commenced the ascent of the Koonap Hill, a long winding steep road, strewed, like the pass of the previous day, with the bones and carcasses of horses and bullocks, victims, not of savages, but of civilized cruelty; in our own case, one after another, twenty-one oxen were left dying or perfectly exhausted on the hill-side, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the remainder, weakened by long scarcity of pasture, were goaded to the top, though each waggon was drawn up by a double span, or team,

* Hyrax.

driven by four or five screaming swearing Totties, who, besides their terrific whips, every cut of which left a long bare bleeding streak, used a heavy "jambok" of rhinoceros hide, six feet long, and as thick as a man's wrist at the handle, and at every standstill, when these failed, bent the unfortunate animals' tails till they broke, biting them savagely.

The extensive range of country seen from this hill increased in beauty as we ascended the road which ran along the edge of the ravine, fringed with majestic euphorbias; in the distance deep blue mountains, and plains of red sand, then wavy bush-covered hills, and in the valley below us the winding river, and our rear guard, with their long line of waggons slowly advancing.

It was not till the afternoon that the last waggon reached the top of the ascent. No longer shaded by high wooded banks, we found the sun oppressively hot as we trekked along through endless clumps of dusty spek-boom, or elephant tree. In the evening we had a magnificent sun-set view of the Amatolas; and just as night set in came to a halt (after a march of about two and twenty miles) at Lieuw Fontein (lion's spring), close to a small military post standing alone in a desolate country, and garrisoned by some Hottentot Levies, under an officer of the line, who must have had a lively time of it, as no one dare go beyond the gates, except with a strong mounted escort.

Orders were issued to march at eight next morning, a most gentlemanly hour, as all agreed, and the more cordially as the distance to be performed was only six miles, to the Kat River, to pasture the oxen, which now absolutely required rest and food. They were turned out to graze under the protection of a subaltern's guard, while we hastened to purify ourselves in the rocky stream, protected by an armed party on the willow banks; for some dozen Kaffirs in red blankets

were seen on a low hill about a mile off, their attention apparently divided equally between the herds and the bathers.

After this welcome rest we resumed our march next morning, but before many miles were accomplished, the waggons in front came to a stand-still at the foot of a steep short hill. Judging from its apparently moderate height we thought the stoppage would only be brief, but to our surprise, soon observed the more knowing drivers in rear of the train begin to make deliberate preparation for breakfast, those nearer the front contenting themselves with a biscuit. Fires were made, coffee pounded, dirty bags rummaged, and lumps of raw meat drawn out, studded with copper caps and bits of broken pipe, and plentifully dusted with crumbs and powdered biscuit; and they were soon at work, tooth and nail. As for the troops, no orders having been given for breakfast, from the uncertainty of our movements, we went without.

The last forelouper had finished his scanty pickings and wiped the greasy clasped-knife on his woolly pate, the drivers had smoked out a digestive pipe, and were fast asleep under their waggons, before the "fall in" sounded, and we moved forward. We had wondered at the long delay, but were more astonished, when we came to the ascent, that it had ever been accomplished with such heavily laden waggons.

This achieved, the road was tolerably level, and we jogged on at a good pace to a ruined and deserted missionary settlement, where we were again brought to a stand by the breaking down of a waggon in the middle of a drift. There was nothing for it but to unload and carry everything to the opposite bank, when officers and men set to and spoked it out, inch by inch; the driver, meanwhile, manufacturing a new "dissel-boom" or pole out of a young tree.

On approaching Fort Hare, we were met by a large mounted party of officers who had come out to welcome us, and shortly the place came in sight, which appeared, from the hill, of considerable size, consisting of white wooden houses, and dark Fingoe huts, widely scattered round the fort. Though covering a large extent of ground, the works hardly deserve the name, being in reality nothing more than a small village of thatched mud cottages, enclosed by picketting and low walls mounting a few guns and old musquetoons.

Our arrival was greeted with lively demonstrations of joy by the coloured population, who headed the band, yelling and dancing in a state of complete nudity. Our camp, with two others consisting of Europeans and Fingoe Levies, was on a green level plain, between the fort and the River Chumie, beyond which rose a fine range of lofty mountains.

Anything more miserable in the shape of barrack accommodation than the officers' quarters in the fort can hardly be conceived; uneven floors of dried cow-dung, bending walls of "wattle and daub," smoke-blackened rafters and thatch, crazy doors, and ill-fitting windows, which exclude the light and admit in turn, wind, rain, and clouds of sand, are the characteristics of the best.

We took advantage of our stay here to ride over in a party to the scene of the engagement mentioned, which took place on the 29th December, in attempting to open a communication with the Governor, then blockaded in Fort Cox; when out of a band of only 230 men, after a hand-to-hand fight, two gallant officers, Lieutenants Melvin and Gordon, 91st regiment, and twenty-one privates, were killed, and many wounded. The ground, a thorny valley, still bore marks of the struggle: rags of uniform, and old forage-caps, with bones of Kaffirs, lay scattered about; while from the

grave of the soldiers, bones were protruding, scratched up by jackalls and hyænas, which we carefully buried again in the best way we could.

About thirty Kaffir and Hottentot prisoners were confined in the fort, who sat, for the greatest part of the day, sunning themselves outside the cells, hand-cuffed, and chained two and two. The Hottentots, who had been taken at the capture of Fort Armstrong, and were awaiting their trial by court-martial as rebels, looked sulky, and scowled with a vindictive and villanous expression. The Kaffirs, on the contrary, laughed and chatted with us, through an interpreter, displaying the most magnificent teeth,—a feature common, also, to the Fingoes, and of which both are not a little proud. A fine young Fingoe was pointed out to us among the Levies, who, having had a front tooth accidentally knocked out, got it replaced by an artificial one, for which he willingly paid five-and-twenty shillings.

The resemblance between these two races is such as to make it difficult, except to those who have lived long among them, to tell one from the other. In complexion they are identical, speak the same language; both alike are tall and well made: their women, well proportioned and exceedingly graceful in carriage; to which may be added the similarity of national dress—viz., a kaross of the skins of wild beasts, a bull's hide, or a loose blanket, with earrings and necklaces of tiger's teeth, shells, or seeds; while anklets and armlets of black and white beads, tastefully worked, are worn by the women, with smooth, brightly polished brass rings reaching from the wrist to the elbow, gradually increasing in size.

The Hottentots differ in every respect from both, being very short and slightly made, lean, and with ugly yellow monkey-looking faces, very prominent cheek bones, small turned-up snub noses, and little twinkling cunning eyes, and invariably wearing European gar-

ments, though in modesty the naked Fingoe and Kaffir immeasurably surpass them.

Just as the regiment was assembling for service in the centre of the camp, on Sunday morning, we were startled by hideous yelling and cries from the Fingoe camp, whereby the service was delayed for some time. For seeing the Commandant of the garrison galloping over, followed by other officers, one and all bolted after them, to see what was going on, and found the Fingoes fighting about the division of rations. There were several hundreds of them struggling like demons, in clouds of dust, yelling out their war-cry, and challenging each other. All were perfectly naked, the blood running down the black faces and breasts of many from the blows of "knobkerries," or clubs, which they applied to each other's heads with such astounding force that the very report was enough to give one a headache. Not satisfied with this, some seizing their assegais, rushed furiously into the crowd, yelling savagely, and stabbing right and left. It was with the greatest difficulty, on the part of the Commandant and the officers of the Levies, backed by the efforts of the native serjeants, that the Fingoes were at length quieted, and dispersed. Most of them were more or less marked with the fray, and several had received severe assegai wounds, to which, however, they appeared perfectly indifferent, for, twisting up a tuft of dry grass into a small plug, and stuffing it into the gash, they lighted their wooden pipes, and smoked away as if nothing particular had happened.

General Somerset arrived, and we received orders to prepare for the march on the morrow, on our way to the famed Amatolas, the Gibraltar of the Gaikas, and head quarters of Sandilli, who was said to be strongly posted in their almost impregnable fastnesses. Commissariat and baggage-waggons kept pouring into camp all day long; arms were cleaned and examined;

saddle-bags and pack-saddles, patrol-tents and cooking utensils overhauled and fitted; and all was bustle and preparation. The patrol-tent, by the way, is a canvas affair, about six feet long and three feet high, not much unlike a dog kennel, into which the owner creeps on hands and knees, and is supported by a couple of poles of about four feet high, steadied by guys and pegs, and folds up into a small enough compass to be carried under the arm, though it is generally stowed away on the pack-saddle.

HOTTENTOT WAGGON-DRIVER.

CHAPTER IV.

ADVANCE INTO KAFFIRLAND—ATTACK ON THE AMATOLAS—FORT BEAUFORT —CAMP ON THE KOOAP RIVER.

EARLY on the morning of the 24th June, tents were once more struck, baggage packed, and the long train of waggons stood ready inspanned.

The General, with his Staff, appeared on the ground, where the whole division, amounting to 2000 men, artillery, cavalry, infantry and irregulars, stood drawn up in column; the advance and rear guards were formed; and we moved off to the inspiriting air of "Hieland Laddie," from the 74th band, which accompanied us, at the head of the column, for about a mile; when, halting by the road side (as it had to remain at Fort Hare,) the quickstep changed into the farewell melody of "Auld lang syne," as the long waving line of hardy sun-burnt troops marched steadily past in column of sections; not ceasing till all were hidden from sight in the cloud of dust that floated along the side of the hill called "Sandilli's Kop." The pipers then struck up "Over the Border," and played us across the frontier, into Kaffirland, through the whole of which the "pipes" afterwards accompanied us, inspiriting the men on many a long and weary march, and enlivening our camps with the familiar strains of the "auld country."

Our way lay through level grassy plains along the

base of the Little Amatolas, whose sloping verdant sides were beautifully relieved by fine bold crags and perpendicular krantzes, or cliffs, of grey basaltic rock, and varied by deep belts of wood, marking the course of some invisible mountain stream. On these plains, the advance cavalry patrol, about a quarter of a mile ahead, fell in with some Kaffirs, with whom we saw them exchanging shots among the scattered bushes; and being ignorant of their numbers, began to feel excited, as a troop of horse, detached from the main body, gallopped forward to reconnoitre, or render assistance if needed. It proved to be a marauding party who had been surprised returning with stolen cattle, to one of their villages which we saw a little way up the side of the mountain, and on coming up we found they had re-captured forty head of cattle, and killed three Kaffirs. The corpse of one lay close to the track, his hand still clutching a bundle of assegais. A mounted party was sent to set fire to the village, where they found only a Gaika woman; the rest of the inhabitants having fled to the fastnesses above on the first alarm of our approach. Hundreds of Kaffirs were moving along the summit of the lofty heights on the right, watching our movements below; their figures appearing like specks against the clear blue sky.

A few miles more brought us at last to a halt on the Amatola Flats; where, after a continued march of above 250 miles, we pitched tents by the banks of the Quesana River, at the foot of the Great Amatolas. The sun sank behind the purple mountains in a flood of crimson; and as the darkness gathered around, and troops of wolves and jackals commenced their nightly howling, the flames of the burning village grew brighter and more distinct on the dark hill side. The

heat of the day was succeeded, as usual, by a cold sharp air, and the cheerful camp-fires were quickly surrounded by men and officers; some in blanket-coats and pea-jackets, squatting cross-legged around a steaming camp-kettle; others in the midst of culinary cares, chopping wood, replenishing the fire, or lifting the pot lid to taste the soup; while those who had already dined, were enjoying their pipes. Our evenings in camp were occasionally varied, either by a round of large parties, when each guest invited brought with him his own "tin-tot," knife, spoon, and biscuit; or by musical soirées in our tents; where, with a guttering tallow candle fixed in the socket of a bayonet stuck in the ground, we sipped thick coffee and sang duets and solos with very loud choruses till a late hour, and generally with more satisfaction to ourselves than our neighbours.

The following forenoon several Kaffirs were killed in a skirmish with the Cape Corps, and their huts burnt and destroyed. The expected order was issued for the attack next day, and the division directed to be under arms at five o'clock in the morning, "to turn out without bugle sound, or any noise whatever." A camp-guard of 300 men was to be left behind under a captain; and, lastly, all lights and fires in the camp were ordered to be extinguished at seven o'clock. Till then we sat discussing the anticipated attack, when the curfew put an end to our councils, we groped our way to the dark tents, and lay down to rest in our clothes.

It was still quite dark when my servant shook me by the shoulder, and with some difficulty succeeded in making me comprehend that the troops were already "falling in," and that he wanted to pack up the blanket and plaid on which I lay. Accordingly I jumped up, and after loading the pack-horse with three days' rations,

patrol-tent, kettles, and other requisites for the bivouac, we made our way, stumbling along in the dark, over tent-ropes and picketing pegs, to the parade-ground, where the first brigade was rapidly assembling. The motionless ranks were inspected as far as the imperfect light allowed, and all in silence; and at five o'clock precisely, the General having arrived on the ground, the word of command was passed on *sotto voce*, and we moved noiselessly away to the foot of the mountains, commencing the ascent of the Western Amatolas by the pass in front of our encampment, reaching the summit just at day-break.

Here we were halted in line along the ridge, while General Somerset proceeded with a detachment of the Cape Corps to reconnoitre the position of the enemy on the Victoria heights on our right flank. On reaching the southern point of the range his party was sharply attacked, and a brisk skirmish maintained for a time on both sides. Moving forward a column of two companies of the 91st, and three of European and native Levies, under command of Lieut.-Col. Sutton, the General returned to our brigade to direct the movements of the main attack.

We saw the smoke of the enemy's fires curling slowly up from the dark bush, on a steppe or lower ridge of the elevated range in front, and on the opposite side of a lovely valley which lay at our very feet, carpeted with the smoothest and greenest grass, and dotted with mimosa, protéa, and clumps of tangled bush. On our left towered the lofty peak of the Hogsback, the highest point of the whole chain; and below it lay a finely wooded deep ravine, down the centre of which foamed a milk-white cataract, the dark forest stretching away on either side, and filling the kloof.

In a few moments an aid-de-camp rode up with

instructions for our brigade to move forward and descend into the valley below; the cavalry and pack-horses making a detour of about a mile to our left, to a point where the descent was somewhat less precipitous. After scrambling down to the bottom, we formed "column of sub-divisions," and moved across the valley, perceiving as we neared the lofty bridge opposite several hundreds of the enemy gathering on its summit, their arms flashing and glittering along the edge of the cliff in the morning sun. There was only one point at which this apparently impregnable position was accessible, and that was by a long steep exposed grassy ridge, destitute of all cover, and completely commanded from the top by a perfect fortification of huge detached rocks, behind which we could perceive the enemy strongly posted and quietly waiting our attack, confident in the security of their position. Up this formidable ascent, bare and slippery as the roof of a house, the 74th were ordered to advance and storm the natural citadel at its summit. In the meantime heavy firing, about a mile distant on our right, announced that Col. Sutton's column was engaged with the enemy in that direction; while the different corps of native Levies were moved round to our right and left flanks, those on the left skirmishing through the bush and setting fire to a number of Kaffir huts. Pushing rapidly on to the point of attack, we waded the river, and commenced the arduous ascent, up which, in spite of a burning sun, the men mounted like true Highlanders. To our surprise the enemy allowed us to come considerably within range, and we were beginning to imagine the position was abandoned, when suddenly they opened fire upon us from the shelter of the crags, sweeping every inch of the smooth approach, themselves invisible, the tops only of their black heads peeping over the rocks as they took aim, and disappear-

ing again as instantaneously as the flash of their guns. Showers of balls whistled past us, with the peculiar *ping, whit*, so well known to those who have been under fire; as we mounted, we returned their fire with steady well-directed volleys every time their heads were seen above the parapet of rocks, and deployed into line under a rattling fire, and the fight begun in earnest. A private fell shot in the foot. For a quarter of an hour there was an incessant roar of musketry and whistling of bullets. As we neared the top, scrambling with hands and knees up the crags, which were now discovered to be of enormous size, and in places insurmountable; the fire became hotter, the balls striking the ground and sending the earth and gravel flying in our faces. One man fell shot through the arm and side; I passed another sitting on the ground wounded in several places, and two more awaiting the surgeon's aid; one with a shattered hand and the other a wound in the head, his face deluged with blood. Lieutenant Bruce received a shot in the arm, and a sixth man fell badly wounded in the leg.

The men's mess-tins and folded coats were grazed and torn on every side, and their firelocks shattered in their hands; in one or two instances the barrels were perforated as though they had been soft lead.

Under this fire we sent out two companies in skirmishing order, and climbing from rock to rock, exchanging shots with the enemy at close quarters, crowned the ridge with a cheer, and carried the position, driving off the defenders, who took refuge in a dense forest a few hundred yards in the rear. We now stood in their fortress, which was scattered with remains of roasted marrow bones and torn cartridge covers, the rocks stained with fresh blood. We were astonished at the strength of the position, which might have been

held by a hundred regular troops against such a force as ours, with great loss to the assailants. Towards this forest (of fine timber, the first we had seen in the country), we quickly advanced across the intervening belt of turf-covered table-land. Here again they had the advantage of position; for unseen themselves, they opened a severe fire on us, killing one of our non-commissioned officers at the first volley, the ball passing right through his heart. Our Colonel and the Major very narrowly escaped, a bullet cutting through the clothes of the former by the waist; while the Major's haversac was shot through. Two more men fell wounded, and another, shot through the brain, dropped dead without a groan. The word *forward* was given by our gallant Colonel, who himself set the example, and we dashed into the wood under a rattling fire, and gave them another volley, which must have told severely; for though they always carry off their dead and wounded to prevent their casualties being known, we found as we advanced the bodies of five lying dead in one place, and twelve in another; and as we plunged after them into the tangled forest, the *blood-spoor* showed where others had fallen. The change was so great from the glare of the sunshine to the gloom of the forest, its thick foliage over head interwoven with *baboon-ropes* and creepers, that we could hardly distinguish our enemies as they darted swiftly from cover to cover. Five rebel Hottentots were killed in a hole or pit half-hidden by bush. Another of our men was shot dead by a Kaffir perched in the thick branches of a lofty tree, from which he was brought down, riddled with balls, the body tumbling with a crash into the thicket beneath. A cluster of Kaffir and "harte-beest" or Hottentot huts (the former shaped like a huge bee-hive, the latter like a patrol-tent) was set fire to, without

its being known, till half consumed, that they contained a number of wounded Kaffirs.

We continued skirmishing as they retired before us, dodging from tree to rock, and from rock to bush, taking advantage of every cover to give us a shot, while we kept up an incessant "independent-file-firing," as they retreated, step by step, till lost in thickets, impervious to anything but wild beasts or Kaffirs. Having driven them into their inaccessible retreats among the extensive forests clothing the higher steppes of the mountain, and inflicted a considerable loss upon them, we skirmished through a belt of wood on our right, and after completely scouring it debouched on an *open*, where we halted in column, and for the first time for nine hours sat down to rest our weary limbs. Here we assisted the surgeon in performing different operations on the wounded, whose cries for water were so constant, that our canteens were soon left without a drop to moisten our own lips, parched and blistered by the sun.

It was now two o'clock, and as not one of us had yet broken his fast, it may easily be imagined with what appetite we gnawed at our black biscuit. While thus engaged the enemy was observed stealing out, one by one, from the forest, and collecting on the open table-land, where our gallant fellows lay dead; and to our indignation we saw them, through the telescope, stripping the bodies, without our being able to prevent it, a deep gorge separating us; a few well-directed conical balls, from heavy metalled rifles by Egg and Purday, dispersed them at a distance of three-quarters of a mile; one was seen to fall. The party were rebel Hottentots (Cape Corps deserters), and Kaffirs, the latter perfectly naked, and armed with guns and assegais; two or three we could distinguish wearing the kaross, with head dresses of feathers, from which fact, and their

being the centre of divers knots, we concluded they were chiefs and *headmen*, holding councils of war.

We were joined here by the General and the rest of the forces, including Colonel Sutton's column, which had successfully attacked the enemy on the Victoria Heights, driving them from their position, and killing twenty, but with a loss of three men killed and five wounded (two of them mortally), and had burnt and destroyed two of their villages, which we saw blazing away fiercely, and sending up volumes of smoke on the Little Amatola across the valley. During our brief rest the rebels sent a messenger of truce to say they wished to surrender. Lieut.-Col. Sutton, riding out by desire of the General, held a parley with about fifty or sixty of them at the edge of the wood. They stated that they wished to leave their Kaffir allies, and requested a week to collect their own people, when they would give themselves up. But, as the General, of course, insisted on immediate surrender, and granted only half an hour instead of a week, they quickly disappeared into the forest, their object having evidently been only to gain time.

Observing the enemy again assembling on their former ground, the General ordered the 74th to return through the forest once more. As we worked our difficult way through the underwood, taking care not to lose sight of our right and left files, we kept a sharp look out every step of our way; for each thicket, hollow trunk, or jackal's hole, tuft of grass, or lofty tree, may conceal the stealthy Kaffir when least expected; in an instant the silent forest is suddenly peopled with a legion of naked savages, springing, as it were, out of the earth, with a deadly volley from their unsuspected ambuscade.

We passed the dead body of one of our men stripped naked, lying in the jungle with a ghastly wound in his chest; but having orders to advance through the belt,

and join the column on the other side, it was impossible to stop to bury or remove it. When the column came up, a grave was dug for the other men; and the Colonel, on my reporting having seen the body, sent me back with half a dozen men to bring it in. We had, therefore, to retrace our steps about a quarter of a mile through the forest, at the edge of which a guard was placed to render us assistance if attacked. The magnificent trees, and the fallen trunks in various stages of decay, overgrown with creepers, or green with moss, forcibly reminded one of the backwoods of Canada. We proceeded in perfect silence, with arms ready at a moment's warning, and again came up to the body. The stems of two or three young trees, picked up by the way, and tied together by wild vine, served as a stretcher, on which we bore the body back, and without interruption, nearly to the edge of the wood. As we stopped at this point to change bearers, a sound like the sharp crack of a dry stick was heard; but as we could see no one, and a dead silence reigned around, we resumed our burden, from whose reopened wound a pool of blood had flowed where it had rested. We had just gained the open ground, when suddenly along the face of the wood there blazed a sharp fire of musketry, and the enemy sprang from every bush; our comrades of the extended company at the same moment briskly returning their fire. The balls again whistled past us, lodging in the trees with a sharp *thud*, or ploughing up the ground. One of our men was severely wounded in the knee, and died afterwards while undergoing amputation; the rest plunged into the forest in pursuit of the enemy, who left seven dead on the ground, carrying off many more dead and wounded. This interruption passed, we proceeded with the corpse to the grave, which the men had dug in the soft soil with their hands, billhooks,

and bayonets, where we buried it with the two other bodies of the poor fellows who had fallen; and, having filled up the grave, carefully sprinkled it with dead leaves and sticks, a precaution which, as we afterwards learned from a Kaffir prisoner, was of no avail, for the crafty wretches soon found the spot, and dragging the bodies out, exposed them, as they said white men ought to be, "to the sun and the vulture."

We learned that whilst we were returning with the dead body an armed party of Hottentots came up, and sat down with Lieut. Gordon, who was posted with the company extended along the edge of the forest, and asked for bread and tobacco, stating themselves to belong to one of our native Levies, at that time at no great distance, and whom they strongly resembled in dress. Among them was a man in the Cape Corps uniform, who, when questioned as to his being on foot and in the bush, said he belonged to "troop A, Captain C——'s," and had, with several others, been ordered to dismount, and skirmish with the Levies, their horses being done up. Strongly suspecting they were rebels, but not liking to act on mere suspicion, Gordon went to request the Colonel to see them; but the moment the rascals saw them approaching the spot where they sat talking to our men, they jumped to their feet, and just as the Colonel shouted, "Shoot them down," fired a random volley, followed so instantaneously by the fire of the company that the two appeared as one report, three of the rebels falling on the spot, beside those killed and wounded at the moment we emerged from the wood.

Simultaneously with the above attack, a combined movement was effected by the 2nd division, under Colonel Mackinnon, which was separated into two columns; the first, under his own immediate command, moving from the Quilliquilli along the left bank of the

Keiskamma; and the second, under Lieut.-Col. Michell, proceeding to the Keiskamma Hoek. In conjunction with the operations of the two main divisions, the troops from the garrison of Fort Cox, under the command of Lieut.-Col. Cooper, harassed the enemy in the valleys of the Keiskamma, thus "penetrating the mountains in four columns, converging to a common centre upon the principal strongholds of the enemy." A large native force, under Captain Tylden, R.E., was also placed in position on the Windogelberg, in order to prevent them making for the country beyond the Kei.

It was now near dusk, and having been out since five in the morning we were not sorry to hear the order to return to camp. As we descended the steep pass, stormed in the morning, the lines of camp-fires were seen blazing cheerfully on the darkening plain below, where the rest of the division was already bivouacked. Having again forded the river, on approaching the lines, the officers and men of the 91st came out to meet us. They had got fires lighted, and wood and water ready for our wearied men, and helping to carry in our wounded, shared their coffee with us. Whilst sitting round the fires we talked over the stirring events of the day, lamenting the fate of the brave fellows who had marched out with us that morning in as high health and spirits as ourselves, and now lay in their lonely graves on the heights above.

Shortly after nightfall it was discovered that there was no water left in camp, and, being the orderly officer, I was sent with an armed party to bring a supply from the river, about a quarter of a mile from the sentries, and (being thickly skirted with bush) a very likely ambuscade for Kaffirs, who have a taste for lurking round camps at night. We left the lines quietly, made our way across the dark plain, and soon reached the

river, which we heard, rather than saw, rushing along between its shady banks. The water-party filled their load of canteens without interruption, but the return to camp, which on this side was occupied by the Lévies, was rather a hazardous affair, for the Fingoes have a stupid way of firing first and challenging afterwards. As a precautionary measure, therefore, before he could see our approach, we commenced shouting "Friend!" to the sentry who had passed us out, and also been specially warned of our return; a bright flash was the immediate answer, and a ball whizzed close over our heads: down we all went flat on our faces, shouting "*Friend!*" more lustily than before, as a second shot was fired at us; the stir and jabber among the rest of the Fingoes, which also prevented our being heard, promised a general sortie, in which case we should be shot or assegaied to a moral, so we took advantage of the sentry's reloading to jump to our feet, and make a dash for it; to their great astonishment, rushing almost into their arms, shouting "Friend, friend, you scoundrels, friend!"

The wounded, who lay groaning all night by a fire on the open field, suffered acutely from the cold; their distressing cries, together with the unusual hardness of the ground, kept us awake great part of the night.

We afterwards learned that the enemy's loss was considerably greater than we had imagined, several Chiefs were amongst the slain; Beta, and Pitoi Son-of-Vongya, two of great note. Sandilli, who was present, and directing the movements of his men, was very nearly taken prisoner, escaping only by creeping on his hands and knees through the thickest part of the bush.

The morning after the fight rose dull and misty, and the top of the mountain range was hidden by

white fleecy clouds that rolled half-way down. Not long after daylight a Gaika woman, with a child tied on her back, approached the camp, and coolly walked about among the tents and fires, looking for anything she could appropriate.

The Kaffirs were heard on the heights, every word distinctly audible, shouting to us, "*Nina Ez'innqulo! yinina ukuba niyalusa pzu kwentaba enje izinqulala?*" (Halloa, you Tortoises! why do you keep us up here in the cold?) They distinguished the 74th by this soubriquet, on account of a fancied resemblance between the regimental tartan, and the chequered tortoises that abound on their plains; it afterwards became general among all the other tribes, and was not unfrequently used by our own people.

After sending off our wounded in waggons, under a cavalry escort, to the standing camp at Quesana, we again ascended the same range, though at another point, and by three different routes; the 91st and native Levies by a pass about a mile to our right; the cavalry by another, at some distance on our left; ours, in the centre, though a somewhat shorter course, was by far the steepest and most trying. The men, loaded with their rations, blankets, great coats, firelocks, and sixty rounds of ball cartridge, were so fatigued under the overpowering heat of the noonday sun, that the whole column constantly halted, literally unable to move for the moment. During our ascent, the enemy showed in small bodies on several points, but did not attempt in any way to oppose us; and all three columns met on the table land above, without having fired a shot. After marching about seven miles further, without seeing anything of the enemy, we descended into the Zanooka valley, a beautiful green basin completely surrounded by a splendid amphitheatre

of high wooded mountains. The Fingoes plundered a Kaffir village of considerable quantities of maize, discovered buried in large circular holes, neatly plastered over, in the floors of the huts, to which they afterwards set fire. Here we bivouacked, while General Somerset, taking with him the Cape Corps, and Hottentot and Fingoe Levies, proceeded along the head of the Liguey Stream; where, observing a party of the enemy posted in the forest intersecting the ridge of Mount Macdonald, he moved forward to attack them with the cavalry, and after a brisk skirmish and heavy firing on both sides, drove them back, and on the Levies coming up completely routed them. Descending into the valley of the Keiskamma, he returned, by a long circuit, to the bivouac, about dusk, when the enemy began to creep in nearer, and fire long shots at the groups gathered round the blazing fires. A few bullets dropped amongst us now and then; by one of which a Levy officer was shot in the leg, as he was drinking his coffee. At length, becoming bolder and more troublesome, a party of skirmishers was sent out to disperse them; and we sat watching the singular conflict, of which nothing was visible but the two long straggling broken lines of flashing musketry; one retiring as the other advanced up the dark mountain side. The beauty of the effect was heightened by the prolonged rolling of the reports echoing among the crags.

The whole column moved out of the basin shortly after sunrise, and ascended Mount Macdonald, reaching the summit at ten o'clock, where we halted; while the corps of Levies were detached into the valley of the Zanooka to intercept the enemy's cattle, the spoor of which was traced in that direction. Small parties of Kaffirs were observed at some distance descending

by different paths, into the valley of the Keiskamma, and the bivouac we had just left was soon covered with their dusky figures. The view from this elevation was most beautiful, comprising the whole of the Zanooka valley with its dark and extensive forests, sheltered glens, and smooth grassy slopes, through which wound the Tsimuka, now roaring along, foaming among masses of red rock, then lost among the overhanging trees to appear again between smooth and verdant banks, dancing and glittering in the dazzling sunshine.

The standing camp of the 2nd Division was clearly visible on a large plain about ten miles off: the troops were patrolling in the wooded valleys between us, and in communication with the General.

After completely scouring the bush at our feet, the Levies passed down the valley, skirmishing with scattered parties of rebels, and setting fire to their huts; finally returning under cover of the Cape Corps, which occupied the heights above under the immediate command of the General, with three hundred and fifty head of cattle, which we escorted along the ridges to our former bivouac of the 26th in the Amatola valley; leaving two companies of the 91st regiment to cover the return of the Levies. This they effected leisurely and without molestation, till the top of the pass was gained, leading down to the plain on which we were already bivouacked; when, just as it was growing dusk, they were attacked in the rear by a few straggling Kaffirs, who, taking advantage of the bush which commanded the pass, opened a dropping fire upon them, severely wounding the Captain of the Levies in the arm, which was afterwards amputated. The 91st fired a volley into their cover, which silenced them for a few minutes; but the Levies, exasperated by the wounding of their officer, kept up an incessant

roll of musketry in spite of our bugles; which, in front of the General's patrol-tent, sounded the "cease firing" for full ten minutes. As the darkness increased the combatants were gradually lost to sight, and the flashing of their muskets grew brighter, but less frequent, till they ceased altogether. The wounded man, Captain Melville, was shortly after borne into the camp on a stretcher by the Fingoes, and the weary 91st found their fires lighted by our men, who shared their supper, scanty as it was, with their exhausted companions.

At eight o'clock on Sunday morning, unwashed and unshaven, with tattered clothes and rusty arms, we marched for our standing camp on the Quesana; climbed the face of the intervening mountain, and crossing its ridge, saw the white tents spread on the plain below, which we gained in a couple of hours, and lost no time in realizing the longed-for luxuries of a bathe and a clean shirt.

The officers left behind, had got ready a large camp-kettle of coffee, round which, *tin-tot* in hand, we all squatted, from the Colonel downwards, and read the General's Despatch, and the honourable mention made of our exertions.

For three days the camp remained stationary, the General being absent at Fort Hare, and the troops awaiting commissariat supplies from thence. On the 2nd July, however, we were again in motion, ascending at day-break another part of the same range as before, for the purpose of clearing the eastern range of the Victoria Heights, and of again attacking the enemy's fastnesses in the forests at the southern point of the Hogsback.

After a tedious climb, we gained the top of the path, and looked down on the plain we had just left, where the pack-horses and mules, like pigmies, wound along

wards the foot of the ascent. We halted for a couple of hours on the top of a lower ridge, extended in skirmishing order, lying down among the rocks and shrubs along the edge, looking down into the dense bush below, in which were numerous scattered kraals. From these, as the Fingoes crashing through the underwood were heard advancing through the cover, firing, yelling, and setting everything combustible in flames, the naked Kaffirs stealthily crept, unaware of the sharpshooters above.

In the meantime, a party of the 91st and European Levies attacked the forest stronghold at the southern point of the Hogsback, and thoroughly cleared it of the enemy, burnt their huts, and obliged the inhabitants to take refuge in the highest fastnesses of the lofty Chumie. Two large villages, which, from being of the same colour as the rocks among which they stood, had hitherto escaped our notice, now broke out in flames, sending up into the still air clouds of heavy white smoke, which were seen twenty miles off. The Fingoe and Hottentot Levies, who had been despatched down the valley of the Amatola, burning every kraal on their way, came on a lair, or hiding-place, from which we on the heights could now see the Kaffirs hastily escaping in an opposite direction, their chief, Oba, "son-of-Tyali," plainly discernible riding off amongst them, just as the patrol reached the place; so sudden and unexpected was the discovery and attack of this retreat, that everything was abandoned, and Tyali's wives and children, and those of Oba and other Kaffir grandees, were taken prisoners. A large quantity of karosses, arms, ornaments, and skins, were taken, also the chief's head-dress of cranes' wings (the insignia of rank), with the full-dress jacket and cap presented to him by Sir H. Smith. The whole of the kraals were burnt to the ground. The captured

women were marched through our ranks shortly afterwards, on their way to the General: their stately carriage and dignified step were most striking, as they moved haughtily along with the indescribable ease and grace of manner peculiar to both Kaffir and Fingo women. Having been examined and interrogated to little purpose by the General's interpreter, they were set at liberty, and wending their way back towards their kraal, now a heap of smoking ruins, descended the hill, and were soon lost to sight in the bush below.

The pasturage round our standing camp having become particularly scanty, we moved, the following morning, to the N'caga, or Yellow-Woods, three miles distant.

Just as we had pitched tents, the English mail arrived; and as the welcome news spread like wildfire, hurrying from all sides, we flocked towards the panting post-horses, and as the dusty leather bags were emptied on the grass, crowded eagerly round for the anxiously-expected letters, considerably bewildering the Camp-Sergeant-Major by our zealous assistance in sorting them. Those lucky enough to get letters from home retired to their tents, or to the shade of some tree beyond the bustling camp, to enjoy them—the disappointed vowing never to write home again. The escort with the mail had been attacked in the Ecca valley; the officer in charge (Ensign Gill, C.M.R.), having had his horse shot under him, one of his men killed, and two wounded.

We were permitted to rest in camp next day, though parties of Fingoes were out in all directions, burning and destroying the deserted Kaffir kraals. The whole afternoon they kept pouring into camp laden with their spoils; large quantities of *amazimba*, Kaffir corn,* ornaments,

* Holcus Caffrorum.

head-dresses, and every kind of Kaffir traps and toggery. Several women were also brought in prisoners, but sent about their business after an interview with the General's interpreter, much to the disappointment of their Fingoe captors, who, finding they were not to have the pleasure of putting them to death as they had anticipated, and highly incensed at their being allowed to return unharmed to their own people after the trouble they had been at in taking them, followed the liberated captives out of the camp, heaping on them every curse and abuse in the Kaffir vocabulary, and thrashing them with their *keeries* (long heavy sticks), which, however, was summarily put a stop to by us, as soon as noticed.

The part of the camp allotted to these most zealous allies presented a variety of novel and striking scenes. On all sides the eye encountered black fellows of stalwart frame, arraying themselves in the ornaments and insignia of despoiled *Inkosi* and *Amapakati*,* singing to themselves in a deep guttural chant, and dancing in a slow jerking step to some monotonous measure. In a wide clear space a ring of some three score of these athletic forms, blankets and karosses thrown aside, began a war-dance to the strange chorus of their deep voices, accompanied by regular tapping on a shield of ox-hide. The performers shook their gleaming assegais in the air, and jerked their supple frames to and fro, lifting their feet alternately, or jumping with both, as they sung, in perfect harmony, a wild air, swelling from a low organ-like hum to the full power of their lungs; hissing like serpents, and creeping with bent bodies round and round, and in and out, as if on the spoor of the enemy; then breaking out into cries and yells, stabbing furiously at the imaginary victim in their centre, and shaking

* Chiefs and councillors.

their bodies backward and forward, from the knees upward, till the perspiration streamed from every pore. Each verse of the war-song, which was an improvised commemoration of their late achievements, was given by a single voice in a loud recitative, and then caught up by the whole in an astounding chorus,

> Ezani, ezani nina Amaxosa,
> Sobula noko,—sobula noko,—
> Sobula-lá, no-kó !*

In another quarter, round a large iron pot of boiled Kaffir corn, a knot of gormandizers were collected, throwing handful after handful of the swelled and steaming grain down their throats with a steady perseverance perfectly astonishing; while stretched around lay others, watching them with looks of mingled helplessness and envy, their own stomachs already gorged to the utmost limit.

A party of *headmen* and older warriors, seated cross-legged in their tents, ceremoniously smoked the *dagha-pipe*, a kind of hookah, made of a bullock's horn, its downward point filled with water, and a reed stem let into the side, surmounted by a rough bowl of stone, which is filled with the *dahga*, a species of hemp, very nearly, if not the same, as the Indian *bang*. Each individual in the circle receives it in turn, opens his jaws to their full extent, and placing his lips to the wide open mouth of the horn, takes a few pulls and passes it on. Retaining the last draught of smoke in his mouth, which he fills with a decoction of bark and water from a calabash, he squirts it on the ground by his side through a long ornamented tube in his left hand, performing thereon, by the aid of a reserved portion of the liquid, a sort of

* Come on—come on, you Kaffirs !—
We will kill you—we will kill you !

boatswain's whistle, complacently regarding the soap-like bubbles, the joint production of himself and neighbour. It appeared to be a sign of special friendliness and kindly feeling to squirt into the same hole.

For a few shillings and a little tobacco, we obtained a number of handsome ornaments taken from the huts of some of the members of the Gaika Royal Family, such as bracelets, karosses, &c., with the singular head-dresses, *umnqwazi*, made of otter skin and beautiful bead work, which are the insignia peculiar to female royalty in Kaffirland.

Next day we returned to Fort Hare, and encamped on the plain at some distance from the walls. Here we expected to have had a short rest after the incessant marching and countermarching of the last few days, as the morrow would be Sunday, but were doomed to be disappointed, for soon after sunrise tents were again struck, and as the early chapel bell tolled for first service, we marched through the straggling village of Alice, the clean Sunday dressed settlers wishing us "God-speed," and the young Fingoes, as usual, dancing round our Pipers in ecstasies of delight. The 91st were left behind to garrison the Fort.

After a hot and dusty march we halted at noon to rest the oxen, near the ruined and deserted settlement of Ely, one of the military villages destroyed by the enemy at the commencement of the war; the houses of *wattle and daub* still standing, though without doors or windows, appeared, from the numerous articles left in them, such as spades, axes, bayonets, assegais, bridles, and kettles, to have been most precipitately abandoned. A march of some miles further, and we encamped towards evening, about a mile from Fort Beaufort, within sight of the foreign-looking little town with its surrounding clusters of neatly built

Fingoe kraals. Next morning we passed through the town, where there are large excellent stone-built barracks, and some snug-looking staff-quarters, with cool verandahs, and high hedges of prickly-pear, enclosing green compounds, adorned with shady trees and large American aloes. It was broiling hot, and we were followed, as usual, by hundreds of Fingoes and Hottentots, while others huddled round their kraals in motley groups, and in every stage of undress—old shrivelled patriarchs, with blear eyes and grizzly heads; haggard witches, with long withered breasts hanging down to their waists; mothers suckling the children tied on their backs; men, as an apology for dress, covering one shoulder with a short kaross; and women, with the most incredible posterior development, whose sole attire was a skin or kilt tied round the waist, reaching barely to the knee; while scores of naked little imps, with enormous stomachs, scuttled about in every direction.

Crossing the Kat river, by a stone bridge, a curiosity in this part of the world, we marched through an uninteresting bushy country to Clu-clu, where we halted and pitched our camp, half the tents being hidden from one another by the mimosa bushes. Though one of the commonest, this is certainly one of the prettiest trees of the country; its light and graceful form, bright green feathery foliage, golden clusters of globular blossom, filling the air with the most delicious perfume, and bristling array of gigantic white thorns, from three to six inches long, thickly studding every twig, make it at all times a striking object. Fortunately there was plenty of shade, and we lay till sundown under a fine tree, enjoying the unusual repose. The greater part of the native Levy attached to our brigade joined here, having marched from Fort Beaufort, after many parting

cups, in a very independent and jovial manner, and contrived to shoot their officer on the road.

7th.—At daylight, we were awakened by a pouring rain pattering heavily on our patrol-tents, and congratulated ourselves that we were not likely to march; but in less than five minutes the bugle sounded "strike tents," and the operation of pulling up pegs immediately commencing, we had to bundle out and arrange our toilet in the storm. The rain having put out every fire, and the unexpected march upset the calculations of servants as well as masters, there was no coffee to be had, and we marched without it.

A party of Cape Corps, which had been out during the night, returned with two hundred sheep, and seventy head of cattle, having killed several Kaffirs. Four miles marching across a plain, bounded on the left by fog, and on the right by the dark range of the Kromme, covered by a canopy of heavy white clouds, brought us to our halt for breakfast, by the so-called Yellow Wood River, a large gully, containing here and there small pools of water, its course marked across the otherwise bare plain by a belt of the large willow-like trees,* from which it derives its name. We discovered here the corpse of one of the enemy killed by the Cape Corps party, and not far off a wounded Kaffir, brought to this point by his comrades, whom, it seemed, we had nearly surprised at their fires, on which the meat was still cooking, or rather, burning. The wounded man wore round his neck a fine string of tiger's teeth, which one of the Levy officers cut off and gave me. On seeing the knife approach his throat, the poor fellow thought it was all over with him, and clasping his hands, with a deep groan, closed his eyes.

* Taxus elongatus.

He appeared as much relieved as surprised to find he had only lost his necklace. The Fingoes, as usual, wanted to kill him, but were prevented by the officers, who left the dying warrior some bread and water, and placed him under the shade in an easier posture.

The sun now shone bright and hot. Our way lay across the steaming plain, on which clumps of mimosa again began to appear; here and there the blackened ruins of some unfortunate settler's house showed traces of the destroying enemy. Towards sunset we came to another green belt of trees that for some time had formed the only break in the parched and level plain, and crossed the deep Koonap River in separate bodies, simultaneously, at four or five different points, by narrow slippery ledges of rock running across it, and forming small waterfalls, over which several of the men slipped into the intervening pools, and, of course, got a thorough ducking.

Soon after the camp was pitched, a party of our cavalry, whose firing we had seen on the hills, came in with three hundred sheep and a few oxen and horses, (belonging to the owner of one of the ruined farms,) which they had retaken from the enemy, seven of whom they had killed, losing one man.

8th.—Parade at six, A.M.; bitterly cold, the ground white with hoar frost, and the water in our tents incrusted with ice; by nine o'clock it was warm to inconvenience, and, in the sun, scorching hot. We wandered, gun in hand, along the wooded banks of the river, where we put up several large monkeys and green and crimson parrots. An iguana was shot by Gordon, about three feet and a half long, just as it was wriggling down the bank to reach the water. Our patrols again returned from a successful pursuit after marauders, recapturing one hundred sheep and seventy head

of cattle, with a loss of three on the side of the enemy.

In two or three days the scanty pasturage, what with the scorching sun and the hungry cattle, had become so miserable as to compel us to change our camp. Accordingly, on the 11th, we struck tents and moved further up the river, halting near a deserted station, or *Post*. Four empty roofless houses, and a chapel without doors, were all that remained of it. The former still contained some common broken furniture, which the men borrowed; and benches, tables, and arm chairs, were placed round the camp fires, forming the oddest scene imaginable. The Fingoes, in their ignorance, made a like use of the fittings of the chapel; the pulpit was found at one of their fires, converted, with the aid of a blanket or two, into a snug sort of kennel; it was, of course, immediately ordered back by the Commanding-officer, in double-quick time, together with the font, in which they were grinding coffee with a round stone.

For two or three days we remained in camp, and our time was occupied in parade and drills, the "extension motions" greatly amusing the Fingoes, who seemed to imagine that the squads of men, swinging their arms, and balancing themselves on one foot, were performing a solemn war dance.

Macomo was at this time reported to be in the neighbourhood with a large hostile force, and a party was sent out against him, before daylight on the 14th, consisting of five companies of the 74th Highlanders, a six-pounder howitzer, two hundred Cape Corps, and the Levies. The patrol was absent two days, and went through some hard work, having to drag the gun, by hand, up the steep and narrow Water-Kloof-Pass, and lift it bodily over large felled trees, placed across the path by the enemy. A number of Kaffirs were seen,

and the artillery was brought to bear upon them; owing to the nature of the cover in which they took refuge, the effect could not be ascertained, though from the precision with which the shells were dropped, their loss must have been considerable. On our side the casualties were two men killed and one wounded, a couple of horses also being killed.

On the morning of their return I was sent with an escort of one hundred men to convey to Fort Beaufort a train of waggons, containing a quantity of spare arms and accoutrements to go into the ordnance store, with some slaughter oxen for the use of that garrison, and to bring back commissariat supplies for the camp. We were joined on the way, for the sake of protection, by a burgher fleeing from his farm, with his wife and family, and three thousand sheep. We soon neared the spot where, about a week ago, the wounded Kaffir had been left; two or three *asvogels*, or vultures, skimmed heavily along the ground from a black object, which proved to be his body, already half devoured.

On the approach of evening we halted on the *open*, drawing up the waggons in a circle, with their dissel-booms outwards. The fires were lighted in the inner space, and the sentries posted about fifty yards outside, with an outlying picquet of Fingoes, for the night was pitch dark, and the neighbourhood infested with Kaffirs, to whom our flocks and herds were a great temptation. Wrapped in a plaid, I sat by the fire contemplating the scene within our little encampment; on one side the soldiers chatted merrily and carelessly over their supper; on the other were the Fingoes, jabbering in their strange dialect; some cutting up lumps of meat with their sharp assegais, and others lying round the fires in wild groups; while the Hottentot drivers, and fore-loupers, sat under their

own waggons smoking apart; the whole brightly illuminated by the blazing fires reflected from the circular wall of white covered waggons. One by one, the men dropped off to sleep, and I was soon left to my own thoughts, surrounded by motionless forms rolled in blankets.

On going the rounds at ten o'clock, I found the Fingoe Levies had very coolly left their posts, and were sleeping comfortably by the picquet fire among their comrades. Calling their sergeant, an immensely big fellow, he rushed to the fire, and kicked up the slumbering figures one after another, overhauling them without ceremony by arms and legs, sorting and turning them over like a creel of fish, shouting all the time at the top of his voice. Having found the delinquents, and awarded them "extra guards" as a punishment, with a threat of the *jambok*, or still more dreaded stoppage of rations, in case of further offence, we marched them back to their posts giving them to understand, that as they would be visited every half hour, it would be advisable to keep a good look out.

What with the angry and incessant barking of the dogs, the uninterrupted bleating of sheep, and the loud snoring of the oxen, all attempts to sleep were in vain. So I sat up, and squatting by the fire, amused myself with piling on fresh wood, wishing by the way, as the picture of old Horace occurred to me—

"Ligna super foco large reponens," &c.,

that I could lay my hand on some of the "quadrimum merum," to render the comparison a little more happy.

At three o'clock the moon rose, and I awoke the bivouac by shouting—"Inspan." Instantly all were alive; the Hottentots tumbled out of their waggons, the men jumped to their feet and folded their blankets, the

sentries were called in, and in ten minutes we were "trekking" across the plain. As we descended the little hollow of the Clu-clu, enveloped in a thick fog, the change was most extraordinary, the chilly raw air striking through us instantaneously, and as suddenly ceasing on our emerging from it on the opposite side. In many places the bush by the wayside glowed with bright scarlet clusters of the bignonia,* which wreathed among the trees. Suddenly Fort Beaufort opened on us, in the centre of a green plain below, the fine mountains of the Elandsberg and Tyumie forming a noble background.

We found the town looking wretchedly dull and deserted, the garrison being reduced to a small detachment only of the Cape Mounted Rifles, besides the Levies.

The Commandant ordered the Commissariat to have the waggons loaded by dark, as the General had directed their return by moonlight.

We accordingly started at nine o'clock the same evening, but with only half the original escort, the Fingoes not making their appearance at the appointed time, their invariable custom on such occasions, remaining behind, making merry in the kraals of their friends, with a glorious disregard of time, and orders. An attack was fully expected, as well on account of our reduced numbers and heavily-laden waggons as from the fact that our errand and return were as well known to the enemy as ourselves. At midnight we halted to let the oxen graze for a couple of hours, while the men threw themselves down on the grass to snatch a little sleep. At two we were off again. Dark glens, hill, dale, and bush, were passed without interruption, and we were once more on open ground. The encampment having been moved during our absence, I rode forward with the *Conductor*

* Tecoma Capensis.

(a most valuable assistant, attached to each train of government waggons), for about two miles, cantering from one rise to another, looking out for the fires, which we at last discovered at a considerable distance, and turning back, put the waggons on the right track, and reached the camp at daylight.

For a week we remained stationary, patrols going out almost daily to different parts of the neighbourhood to check the enemy, who would suddenly appear in the most opposite directions; one day, for instance, attacking a train of waggons in the Mancazana, and killing seven of the escort; and two days after, firing on the post riders between Fort Beaufort and Graham's Town, killing six on the spot, and wounding three others.

Those of us who remained in camp amused themselves with quail shooting, or with reading under the shade of the yellow-wood trees. Hundreds of turtle-doves swarmed in every direction; and though at first there were some scruples about killing them, they were soon remorselessly shot and converted into pigeon pies. Monkeys and brilliantly-plumaged *touracos*, or crested parrots, of a dark green, with purple and crimson tails and wings, filled the belt of the wood along the river with their discordant chattering.

One morning, in beating for quail along a reedy *sluit*, or water-course, we came on the corpses of some of the Kaffirs killed during the late patrols, which, half devoured by vultures and jackals, lay festering in the jungle.

For three days we endured the misery of a sand storm. The hot air was filled with clouds of fine red sand, driven by a burning wind, and shutting out every object at a few yards' distance, blinding the eyes and stifling the breath, while it not only penetrated the tents, covering everything with a thick red coating, but even found its

way into every box and valise. Nothing can be more wretchedly uncomfortable than one of these inflictions, unluckily but too common. The skin becomes dry and hot; an irresistible lassitude is felt, accompanied with headache; the face and hair are red with sand, which, to complete the discomfort, finds its way even under one's clothing. No one ventures out who can possibly avoid it, though even a house is but a partial protection, the closest-fitting doors and windows failing to exclude the finer particles, as the red hue of the furniture quickly shows. Those who, like ourselves, had no choice, braved the storm, with heads bent down and eyes half shut, or shielded by wire goggles with dark blue glasses, giving a most comical aspect to the wearer.

The sand storm at last blown over, we saw in the evening a dense smoke rising about two miles off. A reconnoitring party discovered that the enemy had set fire to the grass, a common expedient with them to oblige us to abandon a position inconvenient to themselves, by destroying the pasturage, and a mode of ejectment so effective, as generally to have no remedy but to trek.

As night advanced, the spectacle was really grand, and all turned out of their tents to look at it; the whole plain, for miles in extent, being one sheet of flame, tinging the sky with a lurid red.

CHAPTER V.

REIT-FONTEIN—STANDING CAMP—MARCH TO SOMERSET—ACTION ON KROMME HEIGHTS—RETURN TO FORT BEAUFORT.

HAVING been thus served with notice to quit, we stayed but two days longer, and then struck tents and marched across the dreary charred plain for nine miles; our clothes, hands, and faces soon becoming as grim as the blackened ground, from which clouds of impalpable ashes rose at every step.

We halted at a deserted farm house called Reit Fontein, having had several shots by the way, at duykerbok and koran,* a species of bustard, highly and deservedly esteemed; its flesh, when roasted, is very like that of the wild turkey of North America.

The encampment was formed near the house, a short distance from a garden, containing a spring, by the side of which grew a large clump of bamboo-looking reeds, upwards of twenty feet in height; whence the name of the place. The neighbourhood abounded with duyker, bosch, and steinbok, small varieties of the antelope tribe, found singly or in pairs, in the more open bush; as also paauw,† another of the bustards, about the size of a pheasant, with black head and breast, and finely mottled wings and back; and parties of us

* Eupodotis Kori. † Otis afra.

went out almost daily after them, Baird generally making the best bag.

On the 6th I started with Bruce and 200 men for Somerset, seventy miles distant, to convoy ammunition, and bring back cattle for our commissariat. The halt for the first night was on the Koonap, in which we had a most refreshing bathe. The Fingoes, lower down, swimming and splashing about like porpoises; the instant they came out of the river they were as dry as ever, the water running off their shiny skins as from a duck's back. On the second day we entered a vast level sandy plain, unbroken except by immense ant hills, thousands of which dotted its surface as far as the eye could reach, fresh ones constantly coming in sight as we advanced. A deserted farm-house, one or two of which we passed each day, at long intervals, served as our hotel at night. We established ourselves in the empty echoing rooms, lighting fires in the grates, collecting the scattered chairs and tables, and spreading our plaids on the cartel bedsteads.

Our march next morning was still over immense plains, stretching to the horizon. We came on more farm-houses, abandoned like the rest, in consequence of the outrages of the enemy, and looking the pictures of ruin and desolation; doors and windows broken, dried carcases of sheep and oxen scattered about the front, with rusted implements of husbandry and broken furniture; and gardens overgrown with rank waving grass.

The first herd of spring-bok was here seen bounding away from us; and, though hopelessly out of shot, greatly excited our sporting ardour. Late in the afternoon we came once more to inhabited dwellings; where, however, we were not equally at home as in the untenanted ruins of the previous night. We drew up our

waggons at the door of a Dutch Boer's house, in a deep hollow, where was also a little camp of Mounted Levies, for whom we had brought a supply of ammunition. As neither the Boer nor any of his family spoke a word of English, and we were in the like predicament as to Dutch, and German was useless. our greeting was in dumb show, and we bowed to each other and shook hands in solemn silence. Several Dutch families who had fled from their farms, were living here in their waggons, which were drawn up together for mutual protection, close to the house, their flocks and herds grazing in common. This lively place was called Klip-Fontein.

One of our Fingoes was caught at dusk by the sentry stealing biscuit from the ration waggon, and was soundly flogged by his own comrades—for being found out!

After an early cup of coffee from the Dutchman, who, with that exception, was uncivil and surly, we wound our way up the steep path, and again pursued the track across the sandy plain. The sun rose magnificently behind a distant range of blue mountains. Lots of partridges were flushed at every few yards, and afforded excellent sport for about two hours, when we came suddenly to the edge of the table-land, from which we looked down on a beautiful scene, the more novel and refreshing by contrast with our late march. Instead of the parched and arid plains we had been traversing for three days, a fine valley lay at our feet, thickly wooded, stretching north and south, and bounded by a range of grassy mountains, rising out of forest, and crowned with grey cliffs. Countless acres of prickly-pear, contrasting with the dark bush, spread across the valley, and strips of bright red earth appearing between, gave to the whole an indescribable warmth and sunniness. We descended for about a mile; the cry of the wild pintado resounding on all sides; then passed through a perfect

grove of prickly-pear, eight or ten feet high, and having crossed the Baviaans River at the Roed-Waal drift, so called from the perpendicular red banks of the stream, rested under the shadow of the cactus for breakfast, the sun shining fiercely. Whilst the servants were boiling the kettle, we enjoyed a bathe in the cool rocky river overhung with trees, the clear water tumbling and foaming over huge boulders, taking one's thoughts back to Tweed-side and the bonnie salmon streams of old Scotland.

Several farm-houses, fired by the Kaffirs, were smoking at a distance, in the peaceful looking valley; and further down we found the road strewn with grain, thickly trampled, and stained with blood; while from under a cairn of loosely piled stones, close by among the bushes, peeped the head and shoulders of a corpse. An old man, a ruined settler, whose house had been destroyed by the enemy, had been trekking this way the day before with his sons, and his last waggon-load of grain, when they were waylaid by the Kaffirs, who cruelly murdered two of the defenceless party. Such outrages on the heart-broken settlers were almost of daily occurrence; often exasperating them to savage fury, but more frequently reducing them to helpless despair.

After five and twenty miles' march, we halted at a drift on the Little Fish River, about a mile from Somerset, which is a pretty cluster of white houses, gardens, and orange trees, at the foot of a beautiful green mountain. This was our resting place for two days while waiting the arrival of the oxen, hourly expected, on their way from the Orange River district, and which we were to escort back for the use of the troops. In the neighbourhood is a large and celebrated orange grove, which we visited. It lies at the entrance of a deep ravine in the mountain, and as we rode up, the sun

shone on thousands of ripe oranges, lemons, citrons, shaddocks, and *natches*, a very small and peculiar flavoured kind of orange. The trees, which were of great size, bent under the weight of fruit, and down the long avenues the branches almost met overhead. Fingoe boys, armed with guns, were protecting the fruit from monkeys, as lads at home watch the corn-fields.

At the *Tronk*, which we visited with the Civil Commissioner, we saw about twenty or thirty Kaffir prisoners. It was Sunday, and they were all assembled in a large room, heavily chained, dressed merely in a blanket, and listening, with becoming attention, to a Fingoe preaching in their own language the full, flowing, and sonorous tones of which, with the singular clicks occurring in every other word, sounded both melodious and striking. A Kaffir boy was handed over to us as a prisoner, to be taken down to General Somerset, for sentence. He had been taken a few days before, by a Commando, which had fallen in with, and attacked a band of marauders, of which he was the only one who escaped. Though not more than sixteen years of age, he carried a gun and a bundle of assegais. He had been spared by the Commandant, at the request of his *after-rider*, who begged the boy's life from the hard-hearted Boer, as a reward for his own long and faithful services. He was a handsome quiet lad, and when re-assured, through the kindness of our men, who gave him a pipe and tobacco, with plenty of food and a seat at the fire, he seemed quite happy. His name was *Uyanina*, and he told us, through our interpreter, that his father and two brothers had been killed in the Amatolas; and, in a quiet tone, said that he hoped we would not kill him, as he wanted to go back to his mother. He was told that his life was safe, but that as he could bear

arms, we could not let him loose again until after the war; with which assurance he appeared perfectly satisfied, and lay contentedly smoking the strongest tobacco all day long. In due time the cattle arrived, driven by a party of strange, ragged, wild-looking Gonahs, and one thousand sheep and seven hundred oxen were bleating and bellowing around us. The Contractor (having provided himself with a few rounds of dry sheep's dung, as markers) counted them over to our commissariat agent, depositing one of the pellets in his right hand as each hundredth ox rushed through the two trees between which they were all driven singly.

As we returned. the cattle suffered severely from want of pasturage; not a blade of grass was to be seen, and our horses, which had nothing to eat but the leaves of trees and shrubs during the day, when tied up at night devoured sticks, wood, dry dung, or anything chewable. On the plain we had the good fortune to fall in with several herd of spring-bok; their beautiful appearance and graceful agility delighted us, as they leaped into the air, clearing twenty feet at a bound. A party of Dutch Boers *jagging* them and firing above, drove a herd in our direction, giving us some splendid shots. I kept the head of one, and amused myself in the evening by the camp fire, at Klip-Fontein, by preparing it as a specimen. The tongue, liver, and heart, made an excellent fry, though the flesh is generally dry and tasteless, and requires all the cook's art to render it at all equal to tolerable venison.

More herds were seen the following day, and we galloped after them, over the level plain, for miles, without a check, cutting them off at angles, and getting long shots every now and then. A brilliant full moon illuminated our bivouac, and the Fingoes got up their

customary dance, which they always celebrate at the change; though no longer new to us, it had lost none of its wild interest. A hundred and fifty fine brawny fellows, throwing off their blankets, joined in the strange chorus, dancing and leaping, and brandishing their gleaming assegais in the bright moonlight.

The afternoon following found us in camp again after an absence of eight days.

Patrols and escorts went out daily in every direction, and "light drill," morning and evening, occupied those who remained behind.

To make our quarters a little more comfortable, we set to work and built high circular hedges or kraals of green boughs round our fires, the narrow entrance facing the tent door. After levelling the enclosed space, we furnished them with camp tables and stools, for the tents, what with the sun and the flies, were unbearable during the day, and were used only for sleeping in. The swarms of common house-flies that collected in our tents were really wonderful, the canvas was literally black with them, as well as every dish and can, the moment they were placed on the table; as soon as the sun rose, one was awakened by a cloud of them settling on one's face, fighting in one's ears, and buzzing in one's hair; making the most amiable men give way to harsh language. At last we were obliged to blow them up, once or twice a day, either by surrounding a tempting heap of ration sugar with a train of powder, or by hoisting a charge to the top of the tent, on a board stuck on the point of a claymore, though this plan had the disadvantage of sometimes setting the canvas on fire, and invariably covering the performer with a shower of singed flies.

We were frequently visited by whirlwinds, which caused a little variety in the camp; a cloud of sand

would come eddying along, tear up a kraal, sending the bushes flying in every direction, whisk the men's caps off their heads, whirl loose papers, shirts, and other articles high into the air, level two or three tents, and sail away in an opposite direction, leaving its course through the camp distinctly marked by the track it had cleared.

Towards the end of the month it fell to my lot to escort a large train of commissariat waggons to Graham's Town, fifty miles off. On the Koonap hill, we passed the dead horses of the post-riders, shot there on the 23rd of July, and saw the marks of the bullets scored along the rocks. When in the middle of the Ecca valley we spied a large body of red coats, who, as we neared each other, proved to be a party of the 91st, among whom were some old friends. Soon after parting with them, a number of Kaffirs showed themselves on the hills just above us, watching our movements.

Further down the valley a bosch-buck and a wild boar fell to my rifle; the latter was a splendid fellow, with an enormous head; he must have been at least five feet and a half in length, and two feet and a half high, and had besides his two immense tusks, a singular bony protuberance on each cheek. The Fingoes cut him up in a very few minutes, and resumed their march, each with a joint or lump of meat over his shoulder, spitted on his gun. This valley is said to be a favourite resort of the boar, on account of the immense quantities of the *strelitzia regina*, on the roots of which it feeds; we observed many newly grubbed up; the bush glowed with its handsome red flowers. On outspanning to feed the oxen, a body of Kaffirs showed themselves, and hovered round the cattle with a pretty evident intention of making a sweep of them; but

perceiving we were on the alert, thought better of it, and took themselves off.

The waggon drivers, who are the most insolent and disagreeable men in the world to have anything to do with, having refused to obey the order "to inspan," the Fingoes were sent to bring in their oxen, and two of the most refractory drivers being dismissed on the spot, from the Government service, the rest inspanned at once, and by the afternoon we entered Graham's Town.

Here we were detained three days, when we set out on our return with a six pounder gun-carriage and limber, and a large train of waggons laden with biscuit, rice, coffee, salt, tobacco, and all sorts of supplies for the troops on the Frontier. Another of the English drivers proving refractory and grossly insolent, was handcuffed with a rheim, and marched a prisoner between a couple of Fingoes, passing the next three nights in the cells at the military posts on the road, a piece of martial law which had a most salutary effect on the rest of these independent gentlemen.

On our last day's march, just as evening was drawing in, we came upon the fresh spoor of a body of Kaffirs, not ten minutes old, the print of the bare feet being quite sharp in the fine dust. Its direction was across the track towards a patch of bush commanding the road. The waggons closed quickly up, the men examined their locks, flank patrols of Fingoes were thrown out in advance, and all were on the *qui vive;* but the enemy, who delight only in surprises, did not show, and the camp at Reit Fontein was reached without adventure. Once more patrols were our occupation by day, and *forelaying parties*, or ambuscades, by night; marauding rebels were constantly fallen in with, and killed, and cattle and horses recaptured.

General Somerset, with a detachment of the 74th and

Cape Corps, which had accompanied him into the district of Albany, was at this time actively engaged in following up the enemy in the direction of Riebeck, Hell-Poort, and the Zuurberg hills, and on the 30th of August attacked a considerable body of them on New-year River, where they had taken up a strong position in a very difficult and rugged kloof, dislodging and dispersing them with great loss, besides re-capturing 160 head of stolen cattle and some horses.

Two days after this affair the 2nd Queen's regiment, just arrived in the country, under Lieut.-Col. Burns, had a sharp brush with Botman's and Seyolo's people in the Fish River bush, with several casualties on both sides.

The Kaffirs in our neighbourhood having become, during the General's absence in Albany, unusually bold and troublesome, stealing cattle, murdering and destroying on every side, Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, 74th Highlanders, then commanding the field force in the General's absence, determined to check their daring conduct by attacking them at once with his whole available force in their expected position on the Western Kroome range. We marched from our camp a little before sunset on the evening of September 7th, so as to reach the top of the hill under which we were encamped, just at dark, and thereby prevent our movement being observed by the enemy's scouts. After marching about seven miles in the dark across a level plain, myriads of fire-flies flitting along the ground, we halted at the ruins of a farm, on the Klu-Klu River, belonging to a Mr. Gilbert, whose narrow and extraordinary escape a few months before from the hands of the Kaffirs deserves mention. He was riding with two others from Graham's Town to Fort Hare, when they were waylaid; his companions escaped, but his own horse being shot he crept into the bush,

successfully evading the search of the Kaffirs, who passed and re-passed his place of concealment, and at last sat down to smoke within a few yards of his hiding-place, their dogs all the while snuffing about. When at length they moved away, he took off his boots to prevent the snapping of rotten sticks betraying him, and listening at every painful step, worked his way through the thorny bush, and with his feet dreadfully lacerated eventually reached Fort Hare, where he had been given up as dead.

The ruined house was reconnoitred, and we were told to lie down and take what rest we could till midnight, to be ready to turn out at a moment's notice. The horses were picketed to the broken fence of a grass-grown pleasure-garden, and the men lay down by companies in the farm-yard, with their arms piled in front of each rank. As fires were forbidden, we groped about in the dark among the fallen ruins, and made the best resting-places we could on the heaps of broken slates and brick-ends covering the floors of the blackened chambers, to which the starry sky served as roof. At midnight we were joined by Lieut.-Col. Sutton and a party of Cape Corps and mounted Levies from Fort Beaufort, making up our force to 550 infantry and 103 mounted men.

At two in the morning we marched out of the melancholy desolate place across the open for about seven miles, toward the position supposed to be occupied by the enemy, and reached it just at daybreak, when we discovered that the Kaffirs had abandoned it, and that the large fires reported in this direction had only been burning grass. After a short halt, while this reconnaissance was being made, and during which we felt the cold most intensely, the whole column was counter-marched, and proceeded in an easterly direction along the foot of the mountain range for about three hours, when a halt was made for breakfast at Blakeways, a deserted farm, beau-

tifully situated in a warm sheltered glen, finely wooded, through which the Wolf River wound its way. Numbers of boschbok, disturbed by our approach, were seen scudding across the open flat. While at breakfast an alarm was given that a large body of Kaffirs was descending the hill in our direction; but they proved to be a part of the Fort Beaufort Fingoe Levy taking a short cut to join us. The long dry grass among which we were halted caught fire, and burned so rapidly as to threaten to surround the column, roaring and crackling on every side; and we had to decamp in a hurry to avoid being blown up or shot by the fire reaching the men's ammunition or muskets. Here it was ascertained that the greater part of the enemy were in the Waterkloof, Blinkwater, and Fuller's Hoek, and therefore, as it was out of the question to attempt openly attacking those strongholds with our inadequate force, Lieut.-Col. Fordyce determined on gaining the top of the Kroome Heights at this boundary of the range, and, bivouacking there till dark, make a descent by night, on whichever point might prove advisable.

At once, therefore, we began to ascend the steep face of the mountain, the heat of the sun most intense, not a breath of air stirring, and after two hours' stiff climbing, reached the edge of a forest spreading up the higher ranges. Its shade was most refreshing. From this point we were obliged to proceed in single file, as the steep and difficult path became so narrow; leading along a sharp crest like the ridge of a roof, on each side of which was a wooded precipice, the base of which was lost to sight in the deep ravines beneath. On reaching the summit of the mountain a fine view lay spread before us, the tops of the forest trees below looking like small bushes. Through an opening in the mountain tops we caught a peep of the distant sunny plain, with the white

houses of Fort Beaufort and the winding Kat River. Our own position was a lofty table-land, clothed with grass and surrounded by bush, the edges of the forest running up from the valleys below. On one side was the Waterkloof, on the other the head of the Fuller's Hoek, from which we were separated by a broad belt of forest stretching right across the mountain-top. A single path led through it, difficult and narrow; and its entrance was guarded by a number of Kaffirs, who appeared to be waiting our advance. But this was not our intention, for at mid-day we were halted in a little hollow, through which ran a small stream; and here our march was to be suspended till dark.

The guards were mounted on two commanding ridges, the sentries posted, and the men lay down to rest, or lighted fires and prepared to cook their rations, to which they had added the flesh of two Kaffir oxen just captured; the cavalry horses were knee-haltered and turned out to graze close round,—and all was repose.

We had with us, through a misunderstanding, our Band-master, Hartung, who had left Fort Beaufort with Lieut.-Col. Sutton's party under the impression that it was proceeding to the camp at Reit Fontein, which he was anxious to visit. On finding how different its destination, he repeatedly expressed his annoyance, and his apprehension of an engagement. We had not long been here when a party of officers who had gone up with their glasses to the top of one of the ridges, came quickly down and ordered the men to get under arms at once, as the Kaffirs were approaching in hundreds, running full speed from every quarter. Instantly all was activity; the men sprang up from their rest, horses were driven in, accoutrements hurried on, the untasted contents of soup-kettles emptied on the grass, and pack-horses loaded with incredible dispatch.

In the meantime, being Officer-on-duty, I doubled out with the advance guard, speedily extending, in skirmishing order, along the ridge, above which the enemy were advancing, and with whom the next moment we were exchanging shots at very short range. They were almost hidden by the long grass in which they crouched to fire, and their numbers being overwhelming, the reply we made to their fire was but a temporary check, so that we were soon being gradually forced back, when Captain Duff came rapidly up with a company of the 74th, and reinforced our line of skirmishers; the whole fixed bayonets, charged the enemy's line with the Highland shout, and drove them back into the bush.

The column, which had got under arms with the greatest celerity during this skirmish, now came up, and the Colonel formed the whole infantry in extended order, with the right on the head of the Wolf's-back Pass, and the left "thrown back," the 74th being placed on either flank, with the irregular infantry in the centre; Lieut.-Col. Sutton, with the cavalry, remaining for the present in the rear as a support. The enemy, who had again advanced on the open plain during this movement, now came on in hundreds, running and yelling out their war-cry till within range, when an uninterrupted fire rattled along the lines on both sides, though, as we were well covered behind the ridge, we had no casualties beyond Colonel Fordyce's charger being shot under him.

An immensely big Kaffir was noticed rushing down the opposite ridge, which was not more than 800 yards distant, and running at full speed across our line of fire; unmindful of a shower of balls that fell around him, and at his very feet, he kept straight on towards our right as though he bore a charmed life, shouting, and encouraging the others to follow, as he headed them in an attempt to gain the Pass, and turn our right flank by moving

along the edge of the forest. But in this they were foiled by Colonel Fordyce, who immediately ordered the line "to take ground to the right," while the mounted force, galloping to the front, gave them a volley from their carbines that told among them severely. For half an hour we maintained a sharp skirmish with only a loss of three killed and as many wounded, when the enemy retired on the forest, leaving us in undisputed possession of the ground. As so much ammunition had been expended it was useless now to wait for night and make our intended descent; the cavalry, therefore, was dispatched to the head of another pass, to hold it till our arrival. Macomo himself, at the same moment, conspicuously mounted on a white horse, led about 300 mounted Kaffirs to secure the same point, in which object, however, they were defeated. As soon as we began descending the Pass, the enemy again rushed in from all points, lining the forest through which it led.

The road being exceedingly steep, narrow and rugged, the cavalry in front marched down at a foot's pace, the infantry following, and the Fingoe Levies bringing up the rear. The enemy concealed in the thick bush opened fire upon us the moment we entered the pass, wounding one of our men. We returned their fire whenever the smoke showed us where they lay, and thus continued our descent, with a desultory fire on both sides, till about half way down, when they showed in still greater force, filling the bush on both sides of us. The Fingoes in the rear now evinced their fears so strongly as to encourage a party of Kaffirs, armed with assegais, to rush in among them. This completed their panic, and firing right and left, at random, they hurried headlong down the narrow path *en masse* upon our rear with such force as to knock down and trample on many of our men, while by crushing through the ranks they hindered the others

from loading. Emboldened by this, the main body rushed from their cover, hurled a discharge of their lighter throwing assegais, and then (with the heavier kind, used for stabbing), threw themselves upon us. Our steady fellows had little to depend on but their bayonets, to the use of which they had fortunately long been regularly trained, and now used most effectually. The underwood swarmed with Kaffirs, they were perched in the trees, firing upon us from above, and rushed from the bush below in hundreds, yelling in the most diabolical and ferocious manner, hissing through their white teeth; their bloody faces, brawny limbs, and enormous size, giving them a most formidable appearance.

The narrow road was crowded with a mass of troops, Levies and Kaffirs, the ringing yells of the latter heard above the din of the firing. Some wrestling with the men for their firelocks, were blown almost in pieces, and many were felled and brained by the butt-ends of clubbed muskets. Our gallant fellows fought most bravely; one man, with an assegai deeply buried between his shoulders, singled out its owner, and shot him through the head with the weapon nearly protruding through his chest; a grenadier killed four Kaffirs with his own hand. The huge fellow already mentioned appeared suddenly among us, and seizing a soldier in his powerful grasp, hurled him to the ground; but the man jumping to his feet in a moment, buried his bayonet in the fellow's back, and he fell dead on his face. Three Kaffirs had caught one of our men by the blanket folded on his back, and were dragging him into the bush, when the straps slipping over his shoulders, released him, and he threw himself, unarmed, on the nearest, and wrestled with him for his assegai, both rolling over and over, scuffling on the ground, the well-greased body of the Kaffir giving

him the advantage over the dressed and belted soldier, whose death wound was, however, amply avenged. The ground was soon thickly strewn with the black corpses of the enemy; a score lay in the path, and here and there the lifeless form of a dead or dying Highlander, eight of whom fell, while as many more were wounded. Fighting our way through hundreds of the infuriated savages, we effected the descent of the pass; by the time we had reached the foot the enemy's fire had almost ceased.

On gaining the open ground, we extended and moved leisurely along the plain, the Kaffirs contenting themselves with remaining at the edge of the bush on the rise of the hill, a dense red mass of some two thousand men; a few scattered parties dodging from tree to tree, fired long shots, which fell far short, and to which we made no return, our ammunition being nearly expended.

Our total casualties, were fifteen men and four horses killed, and fourteen men wounded. Many of the men's arms and accoutrements were shattered and perforated by balls. Lieutenant Corrigan was so stunned by a bullet which passed through his forage cap, as to be partially unconscious for some time. Hartung was reported missing, and great fears were expressed for his safety; yet, as he had not been seen to fall, it was hoped he might have taken to the bush, and escaped. The unfortunate chance which brought him out against his will, and his evident foreboding the whole morning, added to the general feeling of anxiety about him.

We marched slowly across the plain towards the deserted farm we had left in the morning; for now that the excitement was over, we felt the full fatigue of such uninterrupted exertion, and dragged our limbs heavily along; the groans of the wounded and the shadows of evening increasing the gloom of the dreary scene. It

had been quite dark for some time when we reached the welcome ruin. A mounted express was despatched for more ammunition, and a waggon to convey the wounded to the camp. Having disposed of them as comfortably as it was possible in the mean time, and lighted fires, we threw ourselves once more on the slates and brickbats, after having been on foot for seventeen hours.

During the night the waggon arrived; and at three o'clock we were roused from our rough but reluctantly-quitted beds, and shivering with the cold, which at this hour is most intense, moved off towards Reit Fontein, more asleep than awake, and in about two hours and a half arrived in camp, nearly done up.

Further inquiries among the men about poor Hartung confirmed our worst fears. He had been seen by several endeavouring to lead his horse, and was repeatedly advised to leave it, but refused, as it had been a borrowed one. A bugler stated, that soon afterwards he had seen him wounded by an assegai and then seized by half a dozen Kaffirs, who dragged him into the bush. His fate was not difficult to conjecture, and proved afterwards to have been more horribly cruel than our worst suspicions had suggested. It was elicited from some Kaffir women, taken prisoners shortly afterwards by Lieut.-Col. Eyre's column, that the unfortunate man had been brutally tortured for three days, cut with assegais, and daily deprived of a joint from each toe and finger, till death terminated his dreadful sufferings. Their accounts were but too truly confirmed by subsequent evidence taken before the Civil Commissioner of Beaufort, from another prisoner, Numkani, a Kaffir girl of N'pai, who detailed the tragic particulars as follows:

"I was living with the sister of my father, in the Kat River country before the war. When the war broke out, I went with her to Waterkloof; she had three sons, who

went there to fight; they were all alive when I came away from Waterkloof, about three moons since. Before that, I heard of a white man having been taken prisoner on the mountains of the Kroome; I heard that he was killed by the Hottentots. I also heard that he was taken to Macomo, and that Macomo sent for one of his sons, Kona, a *headman* named Queque, and some Hottentots. Macomo ordered the man to be killed. He was taken away and stripped, and Queque took his clothes. I saw him wear them after; the coat was dark, I cannot say what colour. I heard say that the men cut his arms and legs. He was two days in that state; the flesh was not quite cut off, but was left hanging to his body. They then cut * * * and gave him his own flesh to eat. They killed him at last by shooting him. I did not see this, but I heard the men often talk about it. I heard that the white man spoke, and said they must not kill him; and that he was begging for his life. I heard that the women danced round him, and were merry; they were Kaffir women. They also beat him with keeries. I heard the men and women singing a war-song when dancing round the white man. He had his hands tied behind him by one of Macomo's sons, named Kona, and the Hottentots; he was lying in the sun all day, and placed in a hut for safety at night. I was out gathering gum the day that the Hottentots first cut the man with a knife; he was tied with a long rheim, and the end was fastened to a tree. This I heard: when they cut his arms and legs, he bled much; he was lying on his side; he screamed when he was cut. They took off a joint of every finger every day while he was alive, and after the flesh of his arms and legs had been cut. I left Waterkloof a long time since, and came to Fort Beaufort. I left Waterkloof because I was starving."

The mark ⋈ of Numkani.

J. STRINGFELLOW, *Res. Mag.*

Such were the fetish-like cruelties perpetrated by these savages; nor can one wonder at their barbarity when they are hardly less brutal towards those of their own race and kindred. When a chief or great man of a tribe is seized with sickness, the 'witch-doctor,' with forms and incantations, dooms some poor wretch to death, on pretence of his having bewitched the ailing man; his flocks and herds are forfeited to the chief, and his children left beggars and fatherless.

One instance may suffice to give an idea of their savage ferocity, and spare the repetition of outrages on the poor settlers, or those unhappy enough to fall into their hands.

"The same Kona, some years before, having fallen sick, a 'witch doctor' was, according to custom, consulted, to ascertain the individual under whose evil influence he was suffering; and, as usual, a man of property was selected, and condemned to forfeit his life for his alleged crime. To prevent his being told of his fate by his friends, a party of men left Macomo's kraal early in the morning to secure the recovery of the sick young chief by murdering one of his father's subjects. The day selected for the sacrifice appeared to have been a sort of gala day with the unconscious victim; he was in his kraal, had just slaughtered one of his cattle, and was merrily contemplating the convivialities of the day before him, over which he was about to preside. The arrival of a party of men from the 'great place' gave him no other concern than as to what part of the animal he should offer them as his guests. In a moment, however, the ruthless party seized him in his kraal; when he found himself secured with a rheim around his neck, he calmly said, 'It is my misfortune to be caught unarmed, or it should not be thus.' He was then ordered to produce the matter with which he had bewitched the son of

his chief; he replied, 'I have no bewitching matter; but destroy me quickly if my chief has consented to my death.' His executioners said they must torture him until he produced it, to which he answered, 'Save yourselves the trouble, for torture as you will I cannot produce what I have not." He was then held down on the ground, and several men proceeded to pierce his body all over with long Kaffir needles. The miserable victim bore this with extraordinary resolution; his tormentors tiring, and complaining of the pain it gave their hands, and of the needles or skewers bending. During this time a fire had been kindled, in which large flat stones were placed to heat; the man was then directed to rise, they pointed out to him the fire, telling him it was for his further torture, unless he produced the bewitching matter. He answered, 'I told you the truth when I said, save yourselves the trouble; as for the hot stones, I can bear them, for I am innocent; I would pray to be strangled at once, but that you would say I fear your torture.' Here his wife, who had also been seized, was stripped perfectly naked, and cruelly beaten and illtreated before his eyes. The victim was then led to the fire, where he was thrown on his back, stretched out with his arms and legs tied to strong pegs driven into the ground, and the stones, now red hot, were taken out of the fire and placed on his naked body—on the groin, stomach, and chest, supported by others on each side of him, also heated and pressed against his body. It is impossible to describe the awful effect of this barbarous process, the stones slipping off the scorched and broiling flesh, and being only kept in their places by the sticks of the fiendish executioners. Through all this the heroic fellow still remained perfectly sensible, and when asked if he wished to be released to discover his hidden charm said, 'Release me.' They did so, fully expecting they had

vanquished his resolution, when, to the astonishment of all, he stood up a ghastly spectacle, broiled alive! his smoking flesh hanging in pieces from his body! and composedly asked his tormentors, 'What do you wish me to do now?' They repeated their demand, but he resolutely asserted his innocence, and begged them to put him out of his misery; and as they were now getting tired of their labour, they made a running noose on the rheim around his neck, jerked him to the ground, and savagely dragged him about on the sharp stones; then, placing their feet on the back of his neck, they drew the noose tight, and strangled him. His mangled corpse was taken into his own hut, which was set on fire and burnt to ashes. His sufferings commenced at ten A.M., and ended only at sunset!" These are the people whom an Exeter Hall spouter compares to "the ancient Scots fighting for their homes and hearths."

Two days after our return to camp, information arrived of a severe and disastrous affair in the Fish River bush the day following the Kroome action. It had occurred between a patrol, under Colonel Mackinnon, and the allied Rebels and Kaffirs in that district, one of their strongest and most dangerous retreats. A party of our forces, having got separated in the thick bush, was cut off, one officer (Captain Oldham) and thirty-one rank and file being killed, and twenty-three wounded in the 2nd Queen's, with one officer killed and one wounded in the Levies, besides several men. The enemy, who by the way used fierce dogs to pull down the troops, had suffered considerably, and the following day were attacked and routed by Lieut.-Col. Eyre with heavy loss, after a sharp engagement, in which two of his officers, Lieutenant Walters and Ensign Thursby, were wounded.

On the 12th, General Somerset, who had broken up and dispersed the enemy in the Albany district, and re-

covered a number of cattle, returned to his head-quarter camp with our two companies and the Cape Corps, which had been with him, bringing also a detachment of the 12th regiment, just arrived from the Mauritius.

The effects of the hardships, privations, and constant exposure to the extremes of heat and cold, began to tell among our ranks; many of the men went into hospital with diarrhœa, dysentery, and pulmonary complaints; and among others Major Fordyce was obliged to return home on sick leave, his health completely broken up.

During this period constant skirmishes were taking place with the enemy throughout the frontier districts, and almost daily depredations and murders were perpetrated by them on the colonists; the disaffection among the Hottentots increasing rather than otherwise, and the rest of the farmers leaving the frontier with what little remained to them of their herds and property. This state of things, coupled with the report of a wounded rebel prisoner, who stated that the Kaffirs were preparing to attack Graham's Town as soon as they had got together 5,000 men, which force was nearly completed, induced the inhabitants of that place to organize themselves in armed bodies for their own protection; places of rendezvous in different parts of the town being selected from their convenience and capability of defence. The churches and chapels were appointed as refuges for the women and children in case of attack, and the signals were to be the firing of a gun and the ringing of the bells. For the further security of the district, Lieut.-Col. Eyre was stationed in the neighbourhood with a strong force.

To return to our own position in the camp at Reit Fontein, we were during this time resting inactive for want of reinforcements to enable us to attack the enemy in his strongholds. Our routine of camp life, relieved

only by sketching and shooting round the immediate neighbourhood, was almost unbroken by any incident, though once or twice we had a little variety in the shape of expected night attacks, ending however in smoke, the guards "turning out" as well as orderly officers at the sound of firing about midnight, which proved on each occasion to have been at the expense of a stray horse or two, doubtless impressing the Kaffirs with a great idea of our vigilance. Some of the mistakes that occasionally occurred were rather amusing, at least to those not personally concerned. A horse of Patton's having broke loose one night, and wandered outside the camp to enjoy a little fresh grass to himself, incautiously advanced straight toward a sentry, by whom he was twice challenged, and not answering was shot through the chest; when the Corporal-of-the-guard visited his post the sentry reported it, and pointed out the direction of the disabled Kaffir, with a quiet remark that "he'd been graning awfu." On another occasion an old soldier, rather deaf, was posted, on a pitch dark and windy night, at an angle of the camp, on the other face of which was an artilleryman. The two had quietly paced their respective beats for some time, wrapped up as usual in their blankets, when old Tait, for some unaccountable reason or other, took it into his head to challenge his fellow sentry, and not hearing any answer concluded at once that he must be a Kaffir, brought him down by a shot in the arm, and running in, held his bayonet steadily at the poor fellow's throat, declaring "he'd rin him through if he offered to budge." Spite of the man's representations, which were all lost on Tait's deaf ear, he kept him down till the Corporal came round, to the 'relief' of both.

A reinforcement of 120 Fingoe Levies arrived from Algoa Bay, and the remainder of the 12th regiment was

said to be *en route* for Beaufort to join our division, which was to move on that place. The rumour was confirmed sooner than we had anticipated, for on the following day "the route" arrived, and was hailed with delight by all, after having been more than two months in this place.

The tents were struck; the dry withered kraals that had encircled our fires were piled over them and set in a blaze as farewell bonfires, and we marched for Fort Beaufort, the cavalry and artillery making a detour by the Klu-Klu to reconnoitre the Kroome. After a hot and dusty march, as we were entering Beaufort our band, which had been stationed here since we last passed through, came out to meet us; its strains sounded strangely full and rich to our ears after the constant skirling of the Pipes, and the effect on the men was most inspiriting as it played us through the long street and square to the plain on the other side of the town, where we encamped with the 12th regiment on the banks of the Kat River.

The Cape Mounted Rifles had their head-quarters here; and after making the best toilet our weather-stained uniform would admit of, we rode over to their mess-house, and once more sat down to the refinement of a civilized table and decent cookery. After our rough camp life, the change from tin cans and clasp knives on the bare ground, to such luxuries as table cloth, chairs, plate, and glass, was quite perplexing; savoury dishes in place of leathery beef, and sparkling champagne instead of draughts of muddy stagnant water; the merry party, and warm and cordial greetings of old friends whom we somehow felt surprised to find alive, were enjoyed with a zest and heartiness which compensated for many a hard day in the field.

All things, however, have their drawbacks, and we

found that the plain was peculiarly fitted for "light drill," of which we had a full benefit during our short *rest*. Two days after our arrival, a horrible murder was committed on the Provost-Sergeant, by a man of the European Levy. He had followed his victim out of the camp at night, and murdered him in cold blood a few hundred yards off, then quietly re-entering the lines at another point, joined his comrades at their fire. At the court-martial, held two days afterwards, the wretch was condemned to death, but his sentence was afterwards commuted to transportation for life.

Though our patrols were out each day as usual, they now seldom fell in with any of the enemy, whose withdrawal from their former outposts, and reported gathering in the Waterkloof, led us to suspect some intended movement in that quarter. Some Kaffir women captured by the Fingo Levies one morning, on being examined by the General's interpreter, admitted their loss on the day of the Kroome action, September 8th, to have been upwards of 150 killed, besides many wounded.

The weather now became daily warmer; we paraded every morning at six o'clock; and after a couple of hours' light-drill on the plain were right glad to remove the sand and perspiration by a bathe in the shady river. On Sundays divine service was performed at nine o'clock in camp, the men drawn up in hollow square facing inwards, the "Meenister" in the centre, with the big drum as a pulpit. Even at that early hour the heat was often so great that several men fainted during the service. The surface of the plain danced in a wavy indistinct outline, and the distorted bushes quivered in the hot air; yet the Fingoes, bare-headed and without covering, basked in the broiling sun, smoking their large wooden pipes in evident enjoyment.

Though capital bush-rangers, and fair fighting men when well backed up by regular troops, these fellows gave us endless trouble from the difficulty of impressing on them the necessity of some sort of order and discipline. It was impossible to keep them in camp anywhere within six or seven miles of a town, and of Beaufort more especially; they were always in the Fingo quarters of the town, and out of the way when required, so that in case of a sudden call for their services, the Sergeants had to gallop off to the different kraals to hunt them up, turning them out with great shouting, and blowing of cow-horns.

The Fingo Levies were universally fine athletic well made men, and those of the Algoa Bay Levy especially so; more perfect models it is impossible to imagine. This superiority arises doubtless from their simple diet, and free and hardy life in the open air, though it is said that they, as well as the Kaffirs, always destroy blind, deaf and dumb, sickly, or deformed children at their birth, or as soon as their imperfection becomes manifest. Whether this be true or not, certain it is that no such are ever seen among them.

In town the young men get themselves up in the most extraordinary style, with smart ear-rings in their ears, and school-boys' caps stuck on the top of their heads, with red and blue velvet tassels; and you daily see them at the stores, laying out their pay in second-hand European clothes,—blue coats with brass buttons, tight fitting surtouts, and fashionable pantaloons; an accompanying party of friends assisting and advising with the greatest gravity. Some showed a strong military turn, stitching broad red stripes down their trowsers, or with an old Cape Corps jacket, swaggering about with a rusty sword and spurs. But in the field, this attire is laid

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aside, and the same fellows pass you on the line of march, at the double, with a "Hi Charlie,"—their dirty blanket, and raw beef tied on their backs, and no other clothing than a checked cotton shirt.

FINGO LEVIES.

CHAPTER VI.

ATTACK ON THE WATERKLOOF—SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS.

FROM the daily reports brought in from all sides, it appeared that the enemy was concentrating a large force, and that greater or less bodies frequently made their way through secret bush-paths by night from the Amatolas to the much discussed Waterkloof, so that it was with more pleasure than surprise that we received, on the 11th October, a sudden order for a general movement of the troops against that stronghold.

Next morning, a little before daylight, General Somerset left the camp with the Artillery and Cape Corps for the junction of the Mancazana and Kat Rivers, where he was to be joined by Lieut.-Col. Michell's Brigade (the 2nd, 6th, and 91st regiments, with two field pieces), marching from Fort Hare the same morning.

The next day they were to ascend the Blinkwater hills from the Kat River valley, and encamp on the heights north of the Waterkloof, to be in readiness to co-operate with the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division by dawn of the 14th.

At ten o'clock on the night of the same day the General's party started, the 2nd Brigade under Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, consisting of the reserve battalion, 12th regiment, the 74th Highlanders, a squadron of Mounted Irregulars, and two companies of Fingoes, in all about 1150 men, marched through the silent moonlit streets

of Beaufort, and crossing the bridge took the Klu-Klu road, halting after about fourteen miles march, at the Yellow-wood River; resting three hours, we again marched for the Goba River, five miles further. The heat of the sun was intense, and the barrels of our rifles and pistols became so hot that we could not bear to place the hand on them.

On reaching the foot of the Kroome, at the point of ascent, the men were ordered to rest till night, and all lay down under the grateful shade of the bushes. Our guide, it appeared, knew nothing of the pass by which he proposed taking us up the mountain; some said it was totally impracticable at any time for horses, and at night almost so for infantry; it was therefore determined to take another path more to the westward.

In the evening, a cold rain succeeded the hot day, and we lay shivering on the ground a confused mass of steaming blankets. A little before midnight we were roused for the march. Comfortless as our rest had been, it was with the greatest reluctance we crept out of our plaids and blankets into the bitterly cold foggy air and drizzling rain, to stumble drowsily along our night-march.

The Kroome rose black and frowning before us, its summit hidden in heavy clouds, which added to its apparent height. The ascent soon became so steep that the mounted men had to alight, and we were in momentary fear that the pack-horses would come to grief. No one who has not felt his entire subsistence for many days to be dependant on a slight accident—the turning of a pack-saddle, the falling of the horse, or the bâtman's awkwardness at some critical moment, can imagine the painful interest with which the ascent or descent of a difficult pass is regarded.

The first ridge gained, we moved along a grassy

level for some distance, the greater part of us more than half asleep, and staggering along like drunken men; every now and then, as some sudden inequality endangered our balance, awaking with a start, again relapsing into a state of somnambulism, which was as painful as it was irresistible; the grassy path assumed the appearance of a carpet, of which I could distinctly trace the pattern; rocks and bushes became beds, chairs, and chests of drawers, which stood round distinct as reality; until with a stumble and a start, consciousness returned, the illusions vanished, and I still found myself plodding along with the same wearying tramp, tramp. This strange sensation was experienced by most of us, at different times, during our long and harassing forced marches by night; and for my own part, so unpleasant did I find it, that in trying to shake it off, I pinched my arms black and blue.

As day began to dawn, and we reached the higher ranges, the scene around and below was grandly desolate; the steep slopes we had ascended looked bare and black in the indistinct light; and the dark summits on every side appeared, and were lost again in the floating clouds.

The column, clambering up the steep laborious path, looked like flies swarming on the heights. The horses panted for breath; and the men were quite "pumped," having been marching two whole nights.

The summit gained, we halted on a burnt and blackened table-land, where we were facetiously ordered to breakfast, having nothing with us but black biscuit, which we sat down on the dewy ground to gnaw at.

A thick heavy cloud or fog hung around, so dense as to hide everything at a few yards distance, saturating our canvas blouses, and striking so chilly that we were heartily glad to move on again, after waiting two hours

in vain for a glimpse of the General's column; it had, however, one advantage; enabling us to take up our position unseen, and totally unsuspected by the enemy, whose attention was occupied with the movements of the other Brigade.

At half-past seven we moved forward along the grassy undulating ridge, with flank-patrols thrown out right and left, and had not proceeded a quarter of a mile when the boom of a gun indicated the direction of the co-operating division; and almost immediately afterwards, through an opening in the driving clouds, we caught sight of the red coats and gleaming arms moving along the heights on the opposite side of the sunny valley, towards its head. The howitzers belched out their white smoke, and we saw a couple of shells burst over a Kaffir village; the cavalry moved rapidly forward, the battalion following, and again all was hidden in the mist. The rattle of small arms, and the occasional roar of the big guns told they were actively engaged; and, continuing for some time, created no little impatience and excitement amongst us.

Meanwhile, we had advanced about seven miles; and halting, piled arms near the spot where we had been attacked on the 8th of September, and about three-quarters of a mile from the belt of bush in front, separating us from the other division. Several companies of the 12th and 74th were extended, lying down to watch the forest, in case any of the enemy should attempt to escape from it: and detached parties of Fingoes were sent into the bush on the right, where they set fire to a number of huts, and with their usual activity, kept up an uninterrupted firing for a quarter of an hour, at some fifteen or twenty Kaffirs. The horses were off-saddled, and turned out to graze, not having had any food since the previous night.

After we had lain in this way for rather more than an hour, a party of the 91st, and Cape Corps was seen issuing from the forest, and an officer galloped forward with an order from the General for our brigade to join him. The picquets were instantly called in, and while the horses were being saddled, we crowded to learn news of the other column. They had had some severe fighting, and had driven a large body of the enemy from their position on the forest heights, into the Blinkwater and Waterkloof, though not without loss. Captain Addison, of the 2nd Queen's, had been severely wounded, Lieutenant Norris of the 6th mortally, two or three men killed or wounded, and Lieut.-Col. Burn's charger shot under him.

On entering the belt of wood, passable only by a narrow rocky path, we had to march in file. The timber was very fine, with luxuriant evergreens beneath, immense creepers and baboon-ropes hanging in festoons, or pendant to the ground, from branches fifty or sixty feet high.

The rear of our column had nearly gained the other side of the belt, from which the head had already emerged, when a sudden volley from a dark thicket above us made the forest ring, while the balls whistled past our heads and struck the trees on the opposite side the path, sending splinters flying on every side. We continued advancing, firing at every puff of smoke, the only indication of the whereabouts of our hidden enemy, until we gained the open, when we were saluted by a succession of volleys from an angle of the forest on our left, especially directed at each officer as he came up, though fortunately, without doing further injury than grazing a few of the men's accoutrements.

We were moving along the open to join the General, when an alarm was given that the 12th regiment, in

rear, with the pack horses, was cut off in the pass. Our companies, just formed into open column, were ordered to the right about, and sent back again at "the double" to extend along the edge of the wood; when a very pretty skirmish took place; our men sheltered by the rocky ground, and the enemy dodging behind the trees and firing from breastworks of loose stones, thrown up in front of their village, along the edge of the forest. Under cover of our fire the 12th cleared the pass, bearing a wounded man with them; half a dozen of our mounted men were wounded, and several riderless horses galloped wildly past. The artillery, posted on a rising ground, about a quarter of a mile in our rear, opened on the bush, wherever the Kaffirs showed themselves in parties, and sent round shot and "spherical case" right in amongst them, whirring and *hurtling* over our heads with an astounding, and, at first, rather startling noise, splintering the trees and killing all within their deadly range. In the hottest of the fire, poor Ricketts, of the 91st, was carried past us, dangerously wounded in the chest. After a sharp skirmish, of about a quarter of an hour, the enemy's fire was completely silenced, and the wood apparently totally deserted;—the "recall" sounded, the skirmishers closed and retired, the regiments were re-formed, and the heavy masses of infantry, moving from all sides across the green flat, joined the General's party.

Having formed open column, we moved off across an extensive undulating table-land of the brightest green, extending for miles on every side, and bounded only by the distant peaks of the surrounding mountains. Far in front rode the reconnoitering party of irregular horse; then came the advance-guard of infantry, followed by the prisoners, carrying their pots, mats, and calabashes on their heads; then the

sad train of wounded officers and men, borne on stretchers—Addison, Norris, and Ricketts, and a dozen more brave fellows; the long, steadily waving column — the 2nd Queen's; the stained and ragged 6th; the newly-arrived 12th, with their bright coats; the 74th Highlanders, in their service-like bush-dress; the gallant 91st; the lumbering artillery; the Cape Mounted Rifles; and a whole troop of pack-horses and mules.

Our retiring was the signal for the enemy to re-appear, which they instantly did, following us out on the open plain, taking up every point of cover and firing long shots, but we took no notice of them until they were drawn out far enough, when the cavalry charged them under Captain Carey, riding over and cutting them down right and left, wheeling round, and charging them again and again till they were totally dispersed.

Thoroughly exhausted, and scarcely able to drag ourselves over the last few yards, we halted at five in the evening, at Mundell's, a deserted farm in a hollow of the plain, after being under arms for nearly twenty hours, and without food.

One of our men, foot-sore and done up, who had fallen to the rear and got into the ranks of another regiment, was reported missing, but shortly afterwards limping into camp, abused his comrades right and left, for having thought him dead.

A mounted body of the enemy made their appearance a little before sunset, on a low hill, about a mile off, and went through a series of regular cavalry movements for our edification; unluckily they were out of range, and our horses and oxen, which had worked fasting since daylight, were just turned out to graze, otherwise they would have been treated to a round shot.

The wounded men had been placed in waggons to be

sent to Post Retief, a small fort, about fifteen miles distant, but by the time they were ready to start it was getting too late, and as parties of the enemy's horsemen were hovering round, it was deferred till the morrow. Poor Norris, who had been rapidly sinking during the evening, died a little before "tattoo." His loss was deeply felt by his regiment and all who knew him.

Our bivouac was in a little hollow, and close to a detached piece of bush, where we found the bones of an elephant shot there a few years before. The camp fires looked singularly beautiful by night, scattered up and down the hill, and glowing among the trees of the little belt of wood in which our regiment had taken up its quarters.

All next day we remained in this spot, waiting a fresh supply of ammunition from Post Retief. Numbers of mounted Kaffirs again made their appearance, and went through similar evolutions, but at a very respectful distance. In the afternoon we buried poor Norris, at the edge of the wood. It was an affecting scene. The corpse lay by the side of the open grave, sewn up in a blanket, through which oozed the blood from his death-wound; around stood uncovered a reverent crowd of officers and men; grey-headed Colonels, and a host of younger bronzed and weather-beaten faces, in stained and tattered uniform; the soldier-like looking old General, with his snow-white hair and drooping grey moustache; the "funeral party" of the 6th, their red coats patched with leather, canvas, and cloth of all colours, with straw hats and wide-awakes, long beards, tattered trowsers, and broken boots revealing stockingless feet, leaning their sun-burnt cheeks on the butts of their "arms reversed," while the clergyman (the Rev. J. Wilson), who had ridden over from Post Retief with a small escort, to perform the last rites for one whom he had known in life, read the beautiful funeral service

with unusual feeling. Scarcity of ammunition prevented the customary volleys being fired over the grave, and we turned away and dispersed in silence. Thus ended the brief but honourable career of a gallant young soldier, beloved and admired by all for his high principles and amiable qualities.

The General rode out afterwards with his Staff and escort to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and soon after his return orders were issued for the march at two o'clock in the morning.

It was pitch dark and bitterly cold, when we rose from our short rest, and we did not, for some reason or other, move off for more than an hour. At length Lieut.-Colonel Fordyce's brigade (12th, 74th, and 91st regiments, with four companies of Native Levies) moved towards the Bush Neck Pass, and a large Kaffir signal fire blazed up on the heights before us, no doubt announcing our approach to those in the valley, into which we soon began a difficult descent by a rocky and tremendously steep pass, slipping from rock to rock in the uncertain light of the grey dawn, or sliding in a sitting posture down the sheer gravelly face.

The valley at last reached, we halted for a few minutes (till the pack-horses and mules in rear scrambled down after us) near a solitary farm-house, a burnt and blackened ruin, with a fine garden full of vines, bananas, orange, lemon, citron, pomegranate, fig, peach, and almond trees, their blossom scenting the morning air. A drizzling rain came on, and we continued our march up the beautifully wooded valley, which was shut in by high mountains, half covered by the fleecy clouds resting on their bush-covered heights, the broad path, cut through a perfect grove of flowering bushes, followed the course of a winding rocky burn up the centre of the glen. As we advanced, the mountains

were varied by grey crags, fine belts of lichen-covered forest, and soft smooth slopes of the greenest grass; the rain gradually ceased, and the clouds slowly lifted, revealing lofty krantzes of basaltic rock rising perpendicularly from the dark bush that clothed the higher ridges; the large forest trees on the summit appearing against the clear blue sky like a fringe of small shrubs. The sun at length broke through the clouds, and the bush, sparkling with dew drops, scented the air with its fragrance. Parts of the road were so strikingly like a park at home that one almost expected at each turn to come in sight of the house.

Along each side of the path, and close to the bush, we found, as we proceeded, the dead bodies of many of the enemy killed in the engagement of the 14th; clouds of flies rose with a startling buzz from the corpses, which lay literally broiling in the hot sun, some on their faces in the long grass, others with their swollen features exposed, and legs drawn up, while a few lay half-reclining under the trees, as though they had died there of their wounds; most were partially eaten by jackals and hyænas, whose spoor was traceable all round; eighteen lay in this way along our path, and the horrible stench in many places told that others were concealed by the dense underwood; among others, was an enormous "Bastaard" Hottentot, who must have been nearly six feet three.

The melancholy ruins of two more farm-houses were passed, levelled with the ground; the fine orchards, in full blossom, contrasting strangely with the forsaken appearance of the blackened heaps of what had been happy and comfortable homes. At the entrance of another valley running into this, on our right, we found the fresh spoor of horses, cattle and sheep, leading along the sandy path that ran up its centre. The

column was halted, and a mounted force, with three companies of the 74th, was detached to follow it, while the rest remained at the point of separation. Some cattle were seen on the hills, about a mile in advance, and we pushed on up the glen as quickly as possible; but after tracing the spoor for two miles, it disappeared in twenty different directions, leading into an impracticable bushy gorge, and as the Colonel did not think it advisable to follow it further, and so delay our great object of clearing the Waterkloof, we returned to the main body.

We now got a sight of the General's column on the opposite heights, moving along the ridge like a train of ants. As we proceeded, they reached the enemy's position just above us, and opened fire from the howitzers; the rolling boom, and the report of bursting shells, was followed by the faint rattle of small arms, from the 2nd and 6th regiments, which through the glass we could distinguish along the edge of the precipice.

Our Irregulars were extended and sent into the bush, to the right and left, climbing to a great height up the hills, working beautifully through the thick forests, and completely scouring it up to the base of the krantzes, setting fire to a number of huts hidden in the thickest retreats; the effect of the blue wreaths of smoke curling up above the tops of the trees in the higher forest after each rolling report; the thick white smoke rising from the burning huts; and the echoing of the Fingoes' peculiar cries, far up on the heights, with the shrill voices of captured women, was most singular. Two companies of the reserve battalion of the 91st regiment were extended across the valley, advancing through the scattered bush in line with the Levies on the mountains; the 12th regiment, and the 74th Highlanders, with the mounted force, following by the road in the centre, in column of sections.

None of the enemy were to be seen, beyond a few single individuals far out of rifle range, perched on lofty crags, which appeared quite inaccessible, and we proceeded up the kloof, destroying their huts without opposition. Along the base of the northern range, and at the edge of the forest, sheltered under its overhanging trees, were numbers of kraals neatly built of reeds, and plastered with mud; immediately in front spread a smooth green, separated from the road by the rocky stream, whose beautifully clear waters bubbled over the stones with a most refreshing sound; a more delightful and picturesque situation for a village could not be found. It had evidently only just been abandoned, for in most of the huts we found fires smouldering on the centre of the mud floors; in some, half-ground coffee lay on the flat grinding stones (proving the fact of their obtaining town supplies); calabashes and sheep-skin rugs were in all, while the large quantities of freshly chewed root showed that a considerable number of Kaffirs must have been there very recently. The whole of these dwellings, built on the property of the ruined farmers, whose sacked and gutted houses we had passed, were set fire to, and in a few minutes, roaring and crackling, sent up their flames high above the shrivelling trees; the whole glen behind, as we entered the narrow pass at its head, was smoking as far as the eye could reach.

The ascent from the valley was by a very steep, rocky path, cut through a cool shady forest, leading straight up the face of the mountain, and only wide enough in many places to admit the men in single file; the underwood was choked up with an endless variety of luxuriant shrubs, entwined with the sweet scented wild vine, baboon-ropes of extraordinary length hanging from the topmost branches of the lofty, bare poled trees, which in some places met overhead, and in others showed a

narrow strip of the bright blue sky above. In the thicket, full of wood anemones and bright flowers, lay the dead bodies of one or two more Kaffirs, exhibiting frightful wounds from the splinters of a shell.

Felled trees lay across the path to obstruct our passage, but the General's column at the head of the pass, and the simultaneous advance of the Fingoes as flank-skirmishers, one party sweeping round the head of the valley on our right, and another clearing the bush on the left, secured our ascent without opposition, till just at the summit, when the head of the brigade having gained the open field or "Horseshoe" (so called from its shape, enclosed by forest), the rear-guard, consisting of the 12th reserve, a company of the 74th, and the mounted men, was sharply attacked from the bush on their left, the Kaffirs after firing a volley rushing out with their assegais. One man of the 74th was killed and one wounded; Gordon, bravely rushing back to his rescue as he was left struggling on the ground with four or five of the savages, shot one of them dead with his pistol, and wounded another, when a few of the men running up, drove off or killed the rest, and carried away the wounded man, whose appearance gave but little hope of recovery, his face being frightfully cut with assegais, and his skull battered by the blows from the butt end of a gun. At the edge of the forest we set fire to a cluster of huts, larger and differently shaped from any we had seen before, and faced with smooth shining reeds; they were believed to belong to Macomo.

On emerging from the bush we found the artillery, the 2nd and 6th regiments and the Cape Mounted Rifles on the ground, and the enemy showing in considerable force on some low rocks on our right, whence they opened fire on us at long range. One man of the 12th was wounded, and one of the mounted men, whose

horse was also killed. Our brigade "formed line to the right," and lay under cover of a ridge, two companies of the 74th and two of the 91st advancing in skirmishing order towards the forest in front, from which the rebels kept up a hot fire, the bullets falling thickly among us. From this position they were quickly driven, and the General bringing two of the guns under Lieutenant Field to bear on the rocks, drove them out of that one also, the shells falling among them with wonderful precision.

It was now about two o'clock, and the Waterkloof having been cleared below, and the enemy driven from their positions on the heights, we were ordered to join the other column under Lieut.-Col. Michell, who had attacked and destroyed the whole of the enemy's camps along the ridge. On our way, the Kaffirs suddenly opened fire on us from a narrow belt of forest on the left; the skirmishers of the 2nd brigade were again thrown forward, a sharp fire ensuing on both sides. A large ball, weighing about three ounces, striking a piece of rock on which I stood, with a loud whirring, lodged perfectly flattened in a small crevice under my feet; and at the same moment one of our men fell severely wounded. The 6th regiment reinforced our line of skirmishers; part of the 74th charged into the little belt of bush; the Kaffirs bolted into the dense thickets of the main forest, throwing away their guns, and we reformed in extended order on the open green on the other side, under fire from a second forest in front, towards which we rapidly advanced. The Kaffirs were seen in several of the largest trees further from the edge of the bush, from which they kept up a hot fire as we approached, and the bullets whistled over our heads much more thickly than was quite pleasant; another private of the 74th Highlanders was shot dead, one of the 12th wounded, four

men of the 91st were severely wounded, two men of the Levies killed, and two wounded, with four or five horses killed and disabled. The bush was entered at "the double," and the belt cleared as before; several of the enemy, who were chiefly "Totties," armed with double barrel carbines, being shot, the rest escaping down the mountain, under cover of the thick forest, impenetrable to our soldiers. Not a living creature was to be seen, and the bugle sounding the recall, we returned and formed column on the open ground; and bearing our killed and wounded on stretchers, and marshalling our prisoners, marched at four o'clock for our bivouac of the previous night, moving across the open flat, as on the former occasion; with two guns, the 2nd, and 6th regiments, and Cape Corps as a rear guard, under Lieut.-Col. Michell.

We had not gone more than three quarters of a mile, when from the very bush we had just left apparently totally deserted, some fifteen or twenty Kaffirs issued; and running forward, fired half a dozen shots after us, which fell some two or three hundred yards short. In less than a minute one of the guns was unlimbered and a shell sent among them, killing several, and so alarming the rest, that they fled in every direction, and disappeared in the bush. Late in the evening we approached our old position, and saw, to our surprise, a party of dismounted horsemen apparently awaiting our arrival. On coming up, we found them to be a party of Burghers from the Mancazana district. Wearied and exhausted as the men were after this long and trying day, they busied themselves at once in looking after the comfort of their wounded comrades, who had the hospital-tent pitched, and everything done for them that was possible; though a single blanket on the hard ground with a canteen for a pillow, or a large stone with a pocket handker-

chief over it, was a poor bed for a wounded or dying man, and we had nothing better to give them.

A mounted party was sent off to Post Retief, to order commissariat supplies to meet us at our halting place the following evening. The women and children taken prisoners were examined by the Interpreter, but no reliable information could be obtained, and they were set at liberty at dusk. The Fingoes, washing down at a little stream beyond the camp, slily watching their opportunity, ran after them hooting and hissing and pelting them as they ran. Having fed our own horses, and picketted them for the night, we rolled ourselves in our plaids, and with the saddles under our heads, were soon sound asleep.

At five o'clock next morning, in a thick fog, we buried the poor fellows killed the day before, digging their graves at the edge of the little clump of trees, a few yards from that of poor Norris; the service was read by the officer of-the-day, and large wood fires were made over all the graves for the purpose of scaring away the wolves and jackals after we had gone, and of hiding the position from the Kaffirs. At seven o'clock we marched, the clouds still resting on the heights, cold and raw, and preventing our seeing more than the ground we walked on; after five miles they gradually dispersed, and we halted at the edge of a small detached belt of forest, and encamped under it, close to the ruins of a farm house, of which but a very small portion of the outer walls remained standing, having been destroyed by the Kaffirs nine months before, since which it had never been visited. We found the skeleton of its former owner, Mr. Eastland, who was barbarously murdered by Hermanus' Kaffirs, and some others residing with him on his own farm. They had surprised him in his house, and after some parleying through the closed door, got him

outside and killed him on the spot; after stealing all they cared for, they set fire to the premises. We collected the remains of the unfortunate man, and carefully buried them in his own garden.

Some of the soldiers, who, as usual, after divesting themselves of their accoutrements, had gone into the bush for firewood, to our surprise came running out, saying it was full of Kaffirs. A party of us seized our arms, spread ourselves across it at one end (it was not more than 500 yards by 900), and having placed parties at each angle, advanced through the underwood. Three Kaffirs were killed, which proved to be the whole party, evidently spies, who had been cut off by our unexpectedly halting here,—the level open nature of the ground, extending for miles on every side of the isolated wood, preventing their making a retreat.

After having been several days without a possibility of changing or removing our clothes, we greatly enjoyed a wash in some muddy pools, in spite of the tepid waters and the quantities of immense bull frogs which we surprised basking on the slimy reedy banks.

On the morning of the 18th, after our customary simple toilet and breakfast, that is to say, after pulling on a dirty pair of boots, and swallowing a tin of thick coffee, the 2nd brigade marched for Beaufort, to bring commissariat supplies, descending the Blinkwater Pass.

At the commencement of the war a party of Winterberg settlers, returning to their mountain farms from Fort Beaufort, were attacked here by the Kaffirs; two of them were killed, and their heads cut off and sent to the witch-doctor, Umlangeni; and two were dangerously wounded, one in seven places, who escaped only by remaining till dusk immersed up to his chin in the river among the reeds. The Pass is a rough and almost impracticable waggon road, winding down the mountain side through thick forest.

A magnificent perpendicular krantz or precipice, on our right, of immense height, completely commanding the road below, was crowned by the 2nd and 6th and artillery, while two guns, guarded by a detachment of Cape Corps, cleared the way before us, throwing shell from the heights on our left down into the forest, in a nook of which, snugly embosomed, lay a Kaffir kraal, which, together with several scattered huts, the Fingoes set on fire as they scoured through the bush. This fertile valley, now totally deserted, was formerly the location of the Gaika chief, Hermanus, or Hermanus Matross, who, it will be recollected, was killed in his attack on Fort Beaufort.

The Kaffirs, who had on our approach fled from the kraal, stood watching us from a rock, from which they were quickly driven by a shell, thrown over our heads right amongst them. After our warm march we luxuriated in a bathe in the river, on the banks of which, and close to the ruins of an old military post, we had made our bivouac; and having washed our own shirts, and dried them on the hot rocks, felt more comfortable than we had done for many days.

Kaffir fires on the heights above Hermanus' Kloof and Fuller's Hoek smoked till dusk, when their ruddy light became visible, and blazed brightly all night.

The following day we remained stationary, waiting for the supplies. The clouds came creeping down the hills all around, as if to envelope us, and ended in heavy rain, which continued steadily pouring down all the afternoon and evening. As we had not even patrol-tents, we sat crouching round the miserable fires in our steaming cloaks, mingling the smoke of our pipes with the heavy wreaths from the damp wood fires, which, circling and eddying round, filled our eyes with tears, giving us altogether, with our dripping forage-caps and damp clothes, a ridiculously forlorn aspect.

After a final pull from the flask of "Cape-smoke," to keep out the cold, we spread our plaids on the sloppy ground, which, at all events, had the advantage of being much softer than usual, and with a few green branches stuck into the turf to keep the wet off our saddle pillows, rolled ourselves up, and, in defiance of the rain, slept till daybreak.

19th.—Stiff and cold with the wet in which we had lain all night, we awoke at four. The 12th and 74th, under Lieut.-Col. Perceval, marched at five to meet the supplies coming from Fort Beaufort, leaving a party behind in bivouac with the pack-horses. The rain cleared off shortly after we had started, and our clothes soon dried on our backs. The General on the Waterkloof heights, with Lieut.-Col. Michell's Brigade, was occupying this interval in reconnoitering the enemy's positions, preparatory to further operations on our return.

We halted within sight of Fort Beaufort, about a mile and a half distant, to wait for the waggons coming up; a few of us having got leave to ride in to obtain a few necessaries for our prolonged patrol, on condition we were back again with the waggons, set off at full gallop, meeting them, to our great annoyance, about half way, and escorted by a reinforcement of the 12th and a fresh draft from the depôt, under Lieutenant Philpot; hastily welcoming him to the Cape, and begging the officer in command of the escort not to distress the oxen by pushing on too fast! we sped on our way, for we were only half a mile from the town, and there was no likelihood of our having such a chance again for weeks. We were soon rattling up the quiet streets of Beaufort, a most ruffianly-looking party, with rusted rifles, mud-caked horses, bronzed unshaven faces, and tattered clothes, torn to shreds in the thorny bush. To our surprise, we found the fashionably-dressed inhabitants going to church, for

we had no idea of its being Sunday. The barracks were all in confusion, the 60th Rifles having just arrived, together with detachments of the 12th and 45th regiments, a strong body of Marines from the men-of-war on the coast, and a party of Sappers and Miners, in all about 1000 men; so there was nothing to be had there in the way of food. Dunbar, however, kindly took us to his quarters, and gave us such a breakfast as we had not seen for many a day; and as we sat on chairs round the well-spread table, with its snowy cloth, we felt as if we were in a dream, though we helped ourselves in a very wide-awake manner. Having each secured in the town whatever we could lay hands on, to take back to our less fortunate comrades, we returned full gallop. I had got a couple of loaves in my haversac, with an enormous cabbage, and a bottle of brandy. We overtook the waggons just as the last one had come up to the Colonel's party, and they were preparing to move forward.

An unusual number of Hottentot women accompanied the train; and as of late their conduct had excited much suspicion in Beaufort as well as in the field (for numbers infest all the camps, a nuisance to everybody but the Cape Corps men and waggon-drivers, from whom they are inseparable), the Colonel had made some inquiries as to their movements; and obtaining very unsatisfactory replies, ordered them to be searched by the Fingoes, who set to work at once with a mischievous alacrity. To the indignation of all, quantities of ammunition were found secreted in their bundles and on their persons, for the undoubted purpose of being clandestinely conveyed to the Rebels. On one woman ninety-five rounds of government ammunition were found; on another, eighty; others had smaller quantities; and one carried a canister of loose powder, and a bullet-mould and turnscrew. They must either have stolen or obtained the ball-cartridge

from the Hottentots at Beaufort in government pay; and how and to what extent the practice was carried on, became a question of serious consideration. It was with the greatest difficulty the women were rescued from the infuriated Fingoes, who would have assegaied them on the spot but for the interference of the officers; they were sent back prisoners to Beaufort. By these wretches the enemy was provided, not only with means for destroying us, but of keeping themselves in absolute comfort. Ammunition and food it was accidentally found had been regularly forwarded to them by the Tottie women of our own camps, fed, by the way, at the government expense, who, under pretence of collecting firewood in the bush, hid their supplies in certain assigned spots, whence they were to be secretly taken away at night by the rebels.

Late in the afternoon our long train reached the bivouac in torrents of rain, which again poured down with a steady relentlessness that soon flooded the camp, and we made up our minds for another wet night. On rising, at three o'clock next morning, we found little pools of water collected in the hollows indented in the soft ground by our hips and shoulders. We fell in, and stood for half an hour in the ranks ankle deep in the mud, waiting for the waggons to move on, shivering like men with ague, our fingers so benumbed that we could scarcely hold our rifles. After creeping along for about half a mile we came to a complete stand-still at a small rise, the road being too slippery for the oxen, which cannot draw on wet ground, and we had to return to our bivouac once more.

Here we remained all day in the incessant rain, *slushing* about in the mud, and trying to keep our feet warm by pacing up and down as on board ship, for it was not safe in the thick fog to venture far enough from

the camp for a walk. We busied ourselves also in trying to make the fires burn better; collecting stones, and building them up so as to raise the wood from the flooded ground. A cloaked and dripping cavalry express enveloped in steam, arrived in the afternoon from the Heights with a letter from the General, to know why we had not marched, as the covering party at the top of the pass had been waiting for us several hours. Shortly afterwards a second equally damp party came in with a despatch, "to be forwarded immediately" to Fort Beaufort, ordering the 60th Rifles to move to the Blinkwater the following day.

Next morning we made another attempt to get the waggons off, but after an hour's work had only got about 200 yards from the bivouac, and continued for the next three to crawl along at this snail's pace, suffering very much in our thin clothing from the frost. On entering the foot of the pass at its upper end a party of Kaffirs, perched on the summit of an isolated sugarloaf hill on our left, shouted to us, "*Nina Ez'innqulo ez'ingafanela ukuze apa kanjako kulendhlela leyo!*" (You Tortoise warriors had better not again attempt to come by this path.) Every word being perfectly distinct, though at first we could barely distinguish their forms; then they upbraided the Fingoes, "*Nina Amafingo yinina ukuba niya silwa tina? Gokuba nina ezisicthloba zetu kanjaka sasimika amazimba nemasi kumi, nokuba nina inyabulala sina jeninja.*" (Why, Fingoes, do you fight against your friends? We gave you corn, and plenty of sour milk, and you fire at us as though we were dogs.) The ready retort, sung out with measured distinctness was, "*Waza wapendula amanfingo, nina Amaxoso hiyenza amaqoboka tina into ufanela ukuba womtu wa nika uku 'dhle kwamasheshi ake, asibulela tina.* (You made us your slaves, Kaffirs; a man must feed his horse; we do not thank you.)

We desired our spokesman to inform them that if they intended to prevent the white faces coming that way they had better be prepared at once, for another war party was coming the same path to-morrow; to this they replied by firing a shot at us, which fell among the bushes a few paces short; a long shot, even for a Dutch roer, which from the report we had no doubt it was. Many of these heavy clumsy-looking weapons carry a four-ounce ball, and are of enormous length and weight. The nominal charge of powder is as much as will cover the ball placed on the flat palm of the hand, but as it is poured by guess out of the rough cow-horn powder-flask it generally exceeds even this liberal allowance, and if it does not dislocate the shooter's shoulder, or knock him down, seldom fails to send him reeling. On this challenge several of our long range rifles were immediately brought to bear on the group; Baird's, a heavy metalled 'polygroove,' by Dickson, of Edinburgh, throwing a ball right amongst them at a distance of at least 1200 yards, the effect of which was most absurd; one fellow, who had been standing conspicuously in a dark red blanket, throwing himself flat on his face, and the rest jumping right and left with uncommon agility. They fired several more shots at us, and Bruce, Gordon, and myself, each in turn brought our rifles to bear on them, completely silencing their conversation as well as the fire.

The wheezing oxen having recovered their breath for another spell, the creaking waggons again moved slowly on, and halting every five or ten yards, toiled wearily up the steep ascent, the slippery road constantly bringing a whole team on their knees in their efforts to move their load; so tedious was our progress that we were fourteen hours performing these eight miles. When about half-way up the Pass, at a turn in the road, we saw that "the krantz" was held by a strong party of

the other brigade posted to cover our ascent, the red coats of the 6th and 91st appearing like specks along its lofty precipitous edge, peeping from among the bush and huge masses of rock some hundreds of feet above us. The heat of the sun in the narrow road, shut in between thick forest, was intense, and told fearfully against the cattle. We had barely gained the top of the Pass by three o'clock, and with the exception of a single cup of coffee, at two in the morning, had not yet broken our fast, for unfortunately none of us had any biscuit in our haversacs, as it was "ration day," and we had expected to gain the top of the hill for breakfast. I was, however, lucky enough to get a few raisins from a dirty but generous Dutchman, to the envy of the less favoured. When we had fairly gained the open flat above, the covering party of artillery and infantry was withdrawn, and formed our rear guard, and in a couple of hours more we reached the camp, far more fatigued by the slow creeping pace and constant halting than we should have been by a long day's march, and were so hungry and tired that we could not wait for anything being cooked. As for myself, having secured a lead-like loaf of camp manufacture, I devoured the whole of it, and fell asleep on the grass.

It took us all next day to get the commissariat supplies distributed and the empty waggons escorted down the hill again to the Blinkwater. A sudden stir was caused in camp through one of the guard-fires having been incautiously made without the usual precaution of clearing a space in the long dry grass, which took fire; in a few minutes a large extent was blazing furiously. Independently of the danger to our camp, the loss of pasture was a serious consideration. The General was in a furious rage, and instantly ordered every one in camp to assist in putting it out. In a few minutes a

whole brigade appeared on the ground, armed with green boughs, and spread over the smoking plain, switching away most vigorously at the blazing grass; luckily there was no wind, and it was very soon extinguished, though not before several acres were burnt black, and one face of the camp thrown into the greatest confusion by the hasty removal of the ammunition, blankets, piles of arms, and patrol-tents, from the way of the spreading conflagration. In moving the muskets, one of them went off accidentally, the ball striking the tent in which the General was sitting, with several of his officers; rather astonishing the party within.

On the morning of the 23rd, Lieut.-Col. Michell's Brigade marched from camp for the Blinkwater valley below, to be in readiness to ascend the Heights by Fullers Hoek at daylight the following morning, and assail the enemy's position from that quarter, simultaneously with the attack of the 60th Rifles from the Wolfs Back range on the other, and Lieut.-Col. Fordyce's direct on their front. In the evening orders were issued for the march before daylight; it was a dark cold morning, and we were enveloped in the chilly mist as we moved along the ridge, until day broke, when the clouds lifting we got fine views of the valleys below, lighted up with the morning sun. Some Kaffir horses, which had been grazing during the night, and had been left out longer than usual, were seen near the edge of the bush, and some of our horsemen, after a short chevy, captured them, a few shots being fired at the party out of the thick fog. Soon after, a body of Kaffirs was observed making across the open, for the forest above the Waterkloof, about half a mile distant on our right, and the 74th immediately gave chase; the horse guns and Cape Corps galloped to an eminence on our left, and fired several rounds of shell into another body

assembled on a ridge, leading down into the Blinkwater, to oppose the ascent of Lieut.-Col. Nesbitt's force, which was steadily ascending the steep face of the hill under fire, driving the enemy from point to point. We advanced rapidly in extended order towards the forest, and in a few minutes were warmly engaged with the enemy, who were strongly posted in the rocks among the trees, one of our men being shot dead at the first volley. Entering the wood, we drove them before us till they were lost in impenetrable underwood; the 12th and Fingo Levies covering our movement as we brought right shoulders forward, in direction of the village at the head of the Pass, near the old sawpits, where the enemy had posted themselves, and were with some difficulty dislodged. Colonel Fordyce sent me, with half-a-dozen volunteers, to set fire to the village, which we had great difficulty in effecting, owing to the huts being perfectly green, and during the operation were annoyed by firing from the wood. The regiment held on through the forest, driving the enemy step by step from their cover, but not without loss, one man being killed and another badly wounded, whilst arms and accoutrements were struck and smashed on all sides, though on the whole we escaped with comparatively little damage. One man, in the act of capping his musket, had his finger shot off by a ball, which broke the lock, and two others were slightly wounded, one in the leg, the other in the ribs; many Kaffirs were killed. By nine o'clock the 60th Rifles had gained the Heights and joined our left, while Colonel Michell's brigade, which had ascended the Pass, was seen advancing towards the south-west corner of the plain, through a narrow belt of wood on the right of the position to which the enemy were now driven, and on clearing the bush the rear of the column was attacked, though no opposition had been made to

the passage of the main body. The 91st faced to the right about, and after a sharp skirmish, in which they suffered one or two casualties, drove the enemy back with some loss, when the column crossed the front of the enemy's position, and reinforced our right, which had for some hours maintained the brunt of the fire on the most difficult ground; after a continued roar of rolling musketry and booming guns the last body of the enemy was driven from their position, and retreated through the opposite belt of forest and across the ridge beyond it towards the Kromme.

It was now noon, and having been under arms and actively engaged since four in the morning, we were right glad of the short rest which was allowed on the whole Division uniting at this point; and halting near a spring, we broke our fast on biscuit and beef. The 60th Rifles had captured about sixty head of cattle, having had one man killed and another badly injured. The poor fellow was brought up with the rest of our wounded, and amputation being found necessary, his arm was taken off on the field at once; one of the Marines was also dangerously wounded, and died two days after. We buried the two Highlanders on the mountain top, and piled a cairn above their grave. Fresh ammunition was issued to all the regiments, from the reserve on the pack-mules, and after a halt of about two hours, the force separated in different directions; Lieut.-Col. Michell's brigade consisting of the 2nd, 6th, 91st, and artillery bivouacking on the ground, in the centre of the enemy's late position. Lieut.-Col. Nesbitt's column, consisting of the 45th regiment, the 60th Rifles, and Marines, was sent down again to the camp in the Blinkwater valley, by the eastern spur of the range, covered by the artillery; the Fingo Levies descending the valley to waylay the Blinkwater passes, and prevent the enemy

escaping in that direction with cattle to the Amatolas; while the 12th, 74th, and cavalry marched with the General for our old bivouac at Mundells Krantz. On our route across the table-land we were suddenly fired on from a belt of bush skirting the edge of the precipice and running up from the Waterkloof forests below, but we continued our march without taking further notice of them than throwing out a flank patrol of the 74th, and a few Cape Corps; they were merely a straggling party, more intent on annoying us than fighting, and did no other harm than wounding a couple of horses. Our total loss this day was only three men killed and seven wounded, after having driven the enemy from an almost impenetrable stronghold—a dense forest with close thorny underwood, and endless barriers of huge masses of detached rock.

The shadows of evening were falling rapidly as we once more entered the lines of burnt out fires on our old bivouacking ground, and we were not long in turning in to rest, lying down round the fires. One or two of us now began to feel the effects of our late wet work, in the shape of acute rheumatism and lumbago, which kept us awake in spite of fatigue.

We marched early in falling sleet, to join the other brigade, on the ridge facetiously denominated "Mount Pleasant." Several large Kaffir fires were seen on the heights on the opposite side of the Waterkloof valley, the smoke hanging heavily in the damp air. The tops of the distant mountains and most of the nearer peaks were white with snow that had fallen during the night, and the breeze from that direction blew so bitterly cold on our saturated clothes, that we were perfectly benumbed in our light marching dress, which, though warmer than agreeable under the mid-day sun, was a very indifferent protection against such weather. On reach-

ing the bivouac of the brigade in occupation, we found they had suffered much more than ourselves; the chill wind swept unbroken over the bleak exposed ridge which was covered with snow, and the trenches which the men had dug before the rain came on, to sleep in under shelter of the earth thrown out of them, were full of water. A consultation took place between the two Commanders as to the advisability, or rather practicability of making any movement in such weather. During this, partly to keep themselves warm, and partly to commemorate the death of an unfortunate Kaffir spy whom they had just assegaied, the Fingoes gathered in a circle and performed a war dance, with unusually savage yells and gesticulations. The rain was evidently determined to make a day of it, and about eleven o'clock we were driven back again to our old bivouac,—of the very sight of which we were thoroughly weary. It had been visited during our absence by the Kaffirs, the spoor of whose bare feet was traceable round nearly every fire, on which we found they had been roasting the offal of our slaughtered cattle, and actually eating the bones, which were gnawed off, as if by large dogs. The sloppy ground, after twenty-four hours' rain, and trampling of men, horses and cattle, had become a perfect bog, in which we sank at every step; and with the driving rain, which, like a white cloud, came sweeping across the bleak plain till it dashed in our faces, with the fitful gusts of wind that scattered the ashes of our wretched fires in every direction, our day's halt was anything but a lounge. One of our men, wounded in the fight of the day before, died in the afternoon, and was buried near the graves of Norris and the other brave fellows interred here. The pitiless rain changed only for sleet at night, and the men suffered very much, their blankets having been completely soaked as well as their clothes for many hours, while the ground

was unfit even for the cattle and horses to lie on. In the morning we found ourselves whitened over with hail and sleet, the fog so thick that all operations were out of the question, and another day in this cheerful spot was before us. All day long the belt of wood rang with the sound of the axe; Officers and men, for the sake of exercise, busily occupied themselves in cutting down trees, chopping up and carrying wood for the fires; those that could not borrow an axe or bill-hook, made fires round the standing trunks and burnt them down, when the branches were torn off and carried smoking to the camp, and piled on the fires, which at last burned up, high and cheerily, in spite of the descending deluge.

As there appeared to be no chance of the weather improving, the General determined to move the following morning at all hazards. The troops mustered without bugle call, and silently took their places, the blazing fires casting a bright ruddy light on the dripping ranks, standing motionless in the heavy rain in which the men had lain all night without a murmur. At five we moved off, and after an hour's march through very long grass reached the edge of the heights above the Waterkloof valley, into which we at once descended, scrambling down a tremendously steep rocky path leading abruptly into the deep glen, the advanced sections of the 12th looking like Lilliputian soldiers far beneath, as the breaking daylight showed them already landed at the bottom. Having re-formed our ranks, we proceeded up the valley to attack the new position taken up by the enemy on the southern head of the Kromme range. The big guns and musketry on the heights above our left told that the other brigade was already engaged, and soon after, as we got further up the valley, we saw heavy clouds of smoke rising from the huts they had fired. On reaching the point where the valley branches

into two, we took the road leading up the one on our right, and presently came on a village prettily situated, and indeed almost hidden in the bush; the Kaffirs had but barely escaped, and one or two lurking in the bush were caught by the Fingoes; a small body of them were also seen creeping on hands and knees through the long grass over the crest of an opposite hill, and a party of our horse dashed after in pursuit, and cut them off. We ascended the mountain by a steep winding road; the rain had at last ceased, and the sun was now overpoweringly hot, though a few hours before we had thought it impossible to be too warm. We worked our way through two belts of wood on the ridge without finding any recent spoor of the enemy; and after marching some distance across the grassy table top of the Kromme came to the little basin, on several previous occasions the scene of our bivouacs. The 91st regiment detached from Michell's Brigade, which now held the belt of forest on the top of the range, between Fullers Hoek and Waterkloof, came through the forest in our front and reinforced the column, when we advanced on the enemy's position, and entering the bush had a sharp skirmish, killing several Kaffirs and capturing some horses, after which there being no further opposition, or, indeed, any one to be seen, we returned in a heavy shower to the flat, and bivouacked for the night.

Before dawn we entered the belt of forest separating us from the other brigade, and met with no obstruction; the bush was still as death, and at the top of the path leading out of it lay the corpses of the Kaffirs killed on the 14th. The stench was intolerable. It was impossible to remove them, and as they lay right along the centre of the narrow track we had to file singly past them. A few yards further on lay the clean picked skeleton of the Serjeant of the 12th, killed at the same

time, which was recognised by the fragments of his red coat, torn to pieces, and trampled in the dirt by the hyænás and jackals, which invariably attack white flesh in preference to black. Just at the edge of the wood on the open, lay many dead Kaffirs, and the putrifying carcases of four horses shot on the above occasion; we were nearly all ill from the continued insufferable stench, and hurried along to escape it.

We now stood on the N.W. corner of the Horseshoe, and on the site of the principal Kaffir village; the ground was covered with the remains of burnt and levelled huts; native utensils and ornaments lay about, burnt dogs and dead horses, and here and there the corpse of a Kaffir or Tottie, with hundreds of flattened bullets and fragments of exploded shells that had torn up the rocks around. In front of the position was a line of small stone breastworks, ingeniously constructed of loose rocks, built up about three or four feet high, and from three feet, to twenty, in length, invisible at musket range, on account of their similarity to the rocky ground on which they stood.

We halted for some time here, and the sun was so blazing hot that we stretched blankets over the stands of piled arms, as a shelter from its burning rays; in front of us, rising in the distance above the dark forest that sloped abruptly into the valley below, stood the grand and lofty Winterberg, its lower ranges of a deep purple tint, the higher white with snow. Along the front of the forest the huts were totally destroyed, but just within its shelter we found many still standing, untouched and quite deserted, also cattle kraals and stables, made of young trees, felled and twined in and out between the larger standing ones; in the huts were all sorts of odd things—calabashes, beads, bridles, hatchets, karosses, bags of seeds and of

the red clay with which they cover their bodies, rheims, large pieces of the root of the Noë-boom root, peeled for food; two or three litters of blind puppies, jealously guarded by half-famished curs; quantities of sheep-skins and piles of bullocks' horns, and all kinds of minor rubbish, with several bullet moulds, and a quantity of newly-cast balls. The trees around were scored with bullet marks high and low, and many shivered into splinters by the shells; one or two large and recently-made graves were found, and a sickening odour arose from the thick underwood, where there must have been many more bodies hidden among the tangled thickets. While clambering among the huge masses of creeper-grown rock, which were rudely thrown together in every size and form, among the forest trees growing out of their clefts, I accidentally observed, half covered by the wild vine, a narrow opening between two enormous crags, and peeping in with some trouble, found, to my astonishment, a cave or chamber capable of holding a dozen or fifteen men, the floor covered with grass matting and sheep skins, while the entrance was naturally concealed by a clump of thick bushes. From such hiding places our troops were shot down by unseen enemies, and officers picked off at the head of their astonished men.

At noon a mule waggon was sent over to us from the General's party, across the "Horseshoe," containing a supply of meal, which, as we had not tasted food since the previous evening, was at once made into a sort of water porridge, and greedily devoured; an order arriving for us to move up to the support of the 2nd Queen's hotly engaged just in front, we took our half-emptied mess-tins in our hands, eating the parboiled mess as we went along. We were extended and lay down among the loose rocks in support, the firing

heavy on both sides and stray shots each moment falling among us or striking the stones and flying off with a ringing *whirr*. For more than an hour we impatiently lay here inactive, though under fire. The 6th took up a flanking position in a clump of large trees and opened a steady fire on the enemy; the 2nd were then withdrawn, and retired through our line, their faces begrimed with gunpowder, bearing one dead and one wounded man. As soon as they were clear of the range, the artillery of the 2nd Brigade opened fire on the Krantz; the Kaffirs, however, maintained their ground, and greatly annoyed the 6th by a dropping fire from invisible marksmen. Shortly after, the howitzers of the other column were brought round to the south front of the position, all the guns were going at once, and in a few minutes completely drove the enemy from their stand in the rocky cover, scattering and killing the groups that kept appearing in front. A round shot striking a rock, ricocheted obliquely, and passed between our regiment and the 12th, and close to two officers, but fortunately did no harm, and went bounding and crashing through the forest, clearing its terrific course with a humming roar. The enemy completely dislodged by the infantry from their fastnesses in the bush, and now driven from their successive rallying points, by the admirable practice of the guns, under Lieutenant Field, were seen in the distance retreating over the hills and down the valleys in every direction towards the Kromme Forest, the women carrying large bundles on their heads, a sure sign of their "trekking."

Late in the evening we returned to our bivouac, and long before daylight were again trudging across the dark mountains. At dawn we came to the top of the Wolfsback Pass, and as we halted for a few minutes to allow those in front to file into its narrow

shady path, we discerned, on the opposite hill across the dark intervening kloof, two or three fires, and a few Kaffir scouts creeping along its elevated ridge, in a stooping posture, though plainly visible to us against the brightening sky. We made our way down through the steep forest, and reached the ruined farm-house at the foot of the mountain, where we had halted for breakfast about six weeks before, and seeing no signs whatever of the enemy in these forests, in which it was thought they had taken refuge, again ascended the range by a path a little more towards the eastern extremity, and crossing its ridge, descended into the valley called Fullers Hoek. This is a deep wooded kloof of the Blinkwater, till lately in the territories of Hermanus, who found its thick forests and almost inaccessible retreats so favourable for the concealment of the horses and fat cattle of the colonists, that he was at last deprived of it by the Government, and allotted a more open tract of country in its stead, belonging to a burgher, named Fuller, who, taking possession of the Chief's valley, gave it the name it now bears. The General having moved down into the Blinkwater, with the artillery and horse, co-operated with us, as we scoured through the scattered bush, with companies extended right across the glen, clearing the cover from one end to the other, as we advanced, burning and destroying all the cattle kraals and huts in our way. Some Kaffirs, on the summit of a lofty perpendicular precipice crowning a steep wooded mountain on our left, shouted to us to let the kraals alone, and one of them gave us a song! they were far beyond rifle range.

At noon we reached the camp near the ruins of the old Blinkwater Post, and found the 45th regiment, the 60th Rifles, the Artillery, Marines, and Cape Mounted

Rifles, already encamped. Commissariat supplies were sent up to Lieut.-Colonel Michell's Brigade, left in position on the Heights, at the head of the Waterkloof. A party of us rode into Fort Beaufort, and the 60th marched in in the evening, on their route back to King William's Town. We all dined together at the very humble inn, and slept at night on the chairs, tables, and floors, lots being drawn for an antiquated wooden billiard-table, in consequence of its superior accommodation.

We were to have returned with commissariat waggons next day to the camp, but having mistaken the hour, I was left behind, and had to follow them alone. The road enjoyed no very desirable reputation, but as they could not have got more than three or four miles, I trusted to my horse's speed for that distance, and having ridden at a quiet pace for the first mile, set spurs to him at the entrance of the bush, and dashed along at a rate that would have made me a very difficult flying shot. When half way through the bush, four or five armed Hottentots stood, about two hundred yards before me, whom I at once concluded were some of the Levies belonging to the waggon escort, and congratulated myself on having so soon overtaken them. My horse's foot striking with a sharp click against a stone in the deep sandy road, made them look round, when to my surprise they all bolted into the bush and disappeared; but for this lucky panic, I should, the very next moment, have ridden into the midst of the Rebels, who must, no doubt, have thought that I was at the head of a party. Before they had time to discover their mistake I was round the next turn, and about a mile further on came up with the train.

"Winkel waggons" had come out to the camp, and

the "winklers," or private traders, sold everything they had, from black sugar and meal to sardines and pickled salmon, at the most absurd and extravagant prices; the soldiers lavishly spending their accumulated pay in coffee, bread, and other comforts, which was rather encouraged than otherwise, as preventing the drunkenness that would otherwise ensue the first time they got into quarters.

In the evening the mail arrived from Beaufort, having seen several parties of Rebels on the road lurking among the bush and rocks, and on the hill-sides; the return-bag was despatched with a double escort, and an order issued forbidding any one to go into Beaufort without a proper escort. A Kaffir spy, found prowling in the bushes close to the camp, was chased, and for some time eluded discovery, having disappeared in a most sudden and mysterious manner at the edge of the river; he was, however, finally detected by the quick eye of one of the Levies, who, holding up his finger, quietly pointed to a small motionless black object on the water, near the branch of an old tree; this was the nose of the Kaffir, but so still and motionless was the muddy water that when the Fingo raised his firelock, and took a long steady aim, every one was ready to roar with laughter at the expected "sell;" bang went the old flint musket, and to their surprise the Kaffir leaped up and dropped again with a heavy splash into the blood-stained water.

The waggons had brought our tents, which we had now been without for nearly three weeks, and the camp was pitched with the greatest alacrity, and in half the usual time. Markers were placed and "covered," their bayonets stuck in the ground, streets marked out, and tents brought from the waggons; in a moment there was a hammering of pegs on every side, the tents were stretched out on the ground of each line or company,

and at the sound of two notes on the bugle the whole rose up in their places; what had seemed confusion became the most exact order, and the bare plain was suddenly transformed into a canvas city, the whole being completed in less time than it took the wood and water parties to bring fuel from the neighbouring bush, or fill the camp-kettles at the river.

Heavy rain again came on in the evening with every prospect of a steady continuance, and, though in tents, we were now quite indifferent to it ourselves, we could not but pity the poor fellows on the heights, exposed to the full violence of the storm. We were in for another "three days rain."

The enemy having entirely abandoned the position, Colonel Michell's Brigade marched down into the Blinkwater during the afternoon of the 31st; they had seen the spoor of Kaffirs and cattle trekking out of the district, and had taken some Kaffir women prisoners, who stated that there were only a very few of their people still lurking in the bush, looking after the wounded whom they were unable to remove, and had secreted in their undiscoverable and inaccessible retreats in the twenty square miles of forest that clothe this rugged range of mountains. Some rebel Hottentot women had also been captured, who represented themselves as wandering lambs of the scattered flock of a Mr. Reid, of the Kat River London Missionary settlement. They were very dirty—disgustingly so—and were barely covered by their filthy rags; they were set at liberty, and advised to leave that part of the country as soon as possible. Several horses had been taken by this brigade, and amongst them we recognised that of our lamented Band-master, taken on the 8th of September, whose coat was also found in one of the huts.

The gallant brigade, literally in rags, marched steadily

through our camp for Fort Beaufort in the storm of wind and rain, many with bare feet, and their thin and scanty clothes, so tattered as to be hardly decent. They had suffered very much in their exposed position, diarrhœa and dysentery having laid up whole sections.

For the next three days the rain never ceased for one minute, and the ground became so thoroughly saturated that the floors of our tents were as wet as the flooded plain outside. The wet trembling horses, with drawn-up bellies, and the damp soldiers, with turned-up trews, splashing about amongst the long rows of soaked canvas, looked nearly as wretched as the shivering blanket-covered Fingoes that crouched round the smoky fires.

CHAPTER VII.

FOURTH ATTACK ON THE WATERKLOOF.—DEATH OF LIEUT.-COL. FORDYCE, AND OTHER OFFICERS.

On the morning of the 4th of November the camp was left standing, guarded by the invalids and least efficient men of each regiment, and we marched, under command of Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, up the Blinkwater Pass, and bivouacked at Eastlands, the enemy being reported to be re-assembling on their former ground. The whole of the grassy plain was glowing with bright gladiolus, blue lobelia, everlasting flower, and the graceful sparaxis, of which we found a variety, peculiar to this mountain, of a deep indescribable colour, almost approaching to black.

The next day the 74th Highlanders moved to the head of the pass to cover the ascent of commissariat waggons. We lay under the shade of a spreading mimosa, a merry party, little dreaming this would be the last time we should all be together; some sketching, some sweeping the vast panorama with their glasses, and others practising long ranges with their rifles at the aloes on the opposite side of the kloof. The united contributions of our haversacs, spread on the grass, made a plentiful, but heterogeneous meal, of which, however, very shortly not a vestige remained, our voracity, with constant living in the open air, having become quite chronic.

During the day the other columns of attack were collecting from all quarters, and marching on their assigned rendezvous, in readiness for the grand simultaneous movement to be made the following morning at dawn.

Lieut.-Col. Michell's Brigade proceeded to the Blinkwater camp, to be ready to work along the foot of the Kromme and Fuller's Hoek. Lieut.-Col. Sutton, with two squadrons of the Cape Corps, and the Horse Brigade of guns, moved round the base of the Kromme Range, and past Haddon, to a point at the foot of Bush Neck, where he was to be joined by all the Fingo Levies, and detachments from Lowie and the Mancazana district. We remained in our camp of the night before. The evening passed in anticipation of the coming struggle, which it was generally thought would be decisive, if not severe. Our Colonel, who had just ridden in from Post Retief, joined us, and we remarked that he appeared more than usually interested that evening, and walked from fire to fire, conversing with each group of officers in a quiet tone of the movements of the other brigades during the day, the supposed strength of the enemy, and the prospects of the weather, which had become threatening since sunset. After our customary pipe, we wished each other an early good night, as we were to march to the attack before daylight, and withdrew to our patrol-tents.

At half-past four o'clock (November 6th), the word was given to move off in quarter-distance column of subdivisions; not a bugle sounded, and with feelings of unusual excitement the brigade quitted its ground, and marched across the open flats towards the head of the Waterkloof Pass. The mountain was enveloped in clouds so dense that we could not see more than twenty yards before us, until about six, when a gentle breeze

cleared the summit of the ridge, and left the clouds floating like a vast sea below our feet, completely shutting out the lower world, the tops of one or two of the higher hills, appearing through the motionless expanse, looked exactly like islands, some wooded, others bare and rocky, with jutting peninsulas stretching out, as it were, into the smooth water.

At seven o'clock Lieut.-Col. Sutton's force was reported to be moving up along the Waterkloof valley towards its head, and to cover its advance Colonel Fordyce immediately placed his brigade in position on the ridge, and extending four companies of our regiment, supported by two of the 12th, advanced towards the belt of bush intersecting the enemy's position, which we entered without much opposition, and occupied for the next six hours.

The village at the head of the Pass having been rebuilt, in a great measure, since our last attack, an order was given for volunteers to advance and set fire to it, and, with a party of four men, I had the pleasure a second time of burning the whole of the huts to the ground, with all they contained, together with a large quantity of bullocks horns and hides, stored up for future trading. I had a narrow escape of being shot by the Rebels, who kept up an irregular fire upon us from the wood the whole time; a ball whirring close past my ear as I was kneeling down blowing away at a bunch of lighted dry grass which I had stuck into the wall of a hut, and sending the reeds and mud plaster flying into my face. The village being destroyed, skirmishers were again thrown forward into the forest, and we were ordered to work our way through it to turn the left flank of the enemy's position on a ridge of rocks, unapproachable from the front. An occasional bang, bang, from the thickets, followed by the crashing of balls through the

cover, as we advanced, kept us all on the *qui vive*. Nothing more difficult and trying can be imagined than our laborious progress through this all but impracticable forest, studded throughout with enormous masses of detached rock, overgrown with wild vines, twining asparagus trees, endless monkey ropes and other creepers, so strong, and so thickly interlaced as almost to put a stop to our advance; covered with dense thorny underwood, concealing dangerous clefts and crevices, and strewed with fallen trees in every stage of decay, while the hooked thorns of the "wait a bit" clinging to our arms and legs, snatching the caps off our heads, and tearing clothes and flesh, impeded us at every step.

The advantages which the Kaffir possesses on such ground over regular troops is immense; armed only with his gun, or assegais, free and unencumbered by pack, clothing, or accoutrements, his naked body covered with grease, he climbs the rocks, and works through the familiar bush with the stealth and agility of the tiger, while the infantry soldier, in European clothing, loaded with three days rations, sixty rounds of ball cartridge, water canteen, bayonet, and heavy musket, labours after him with a pluck and perseverance which none but British soldiers possess, and which, somehow or other, in spite of every obstacle in every clime, ever wins its way in the end. Sir Harry Smith, in his despatch of the 18th of December, 1851, to Earl Grey, gives a very just estimate of the character of the formidable enemy with whom we had thus to contend, whom he describes, as fully as much so as the Algerines or Circassians, and says, "Fraternized with the numerous and well-trained Hottentot race, they are, in their mode of guerilla warfare, most formidable enemies, as much so as I ever encountered; and I speak with some experience

in war, to which I may lay claim." The situation of the officer on such occasions is one of no small danger and responsibility; himself leading through all impediments, a coveted mark to every lurking Tottie or Kaffir, he has not only to exercise the greatest vigilance to prevent his men being separated and cut off, but must carefully mark his proper route and bearings, lest he wander into the endless mazes of the trackless forest, and not only lose his whole party, but involve co-operating bodies in disaster.

After leading our flank into the bush in person, and giving his final orders, Colonel Fordyce proceeded to the left of the regiment to direct their movements against the fastness held by the enemy, from the shelter of which they kept up an annoying fire. At this moment he had advanced to the edge of the bush in front, and was in the very act of directing the attack upon it, when he was shot through the body, and fell to rise no more; the last and only words of our brave chief were, "Take care of my regiment:" he was borne to the rear, and breathed his last in a few minutes.

Though our heavy loss was not immediately known, the regiment was for a moment thrown into confusion in consequence of his last orders having been but partly delivered. The rebels yelled in exultation, but the next instant were silenced by an avenging volley, which drove them in again behind the shelter of their protecting trees and rocks, which the regiment boldly and steadily advanced to storm under a fatal fire, which told fearfully among our ranks. Carey fell, pierced through the body, at the head of his company, and was carried off the field a corpse; and immediately afterwards Gordon was mortally wounded by a ball which passed through both thighs, and lodging in the body of a soldier close

DEATH OF LT COLONEL FORDYCE

(Waterfall Nov^r 5^th 1851)

by, killed him on the spot. The loss in the ranks was equally severe; one man was cut down after another, until, maddened by the fall of their officers and comrades, the regiment, under Captain Duff (on whom as senior officer the command had now devolved), rushed to the fatal barricade with such infuriated and irresistible determination, as to clear all before them, killing numbers of the enemy, chiefly rebel Hottentots, who fled in confusion, and carrying the position, which we maintained almost unmolested until the troops were withdrawn in the afternoon.

Beside our deeply lamented officers, the casualties among our brave fellows were very heavy; Sergeants Cairnie and Diarmid, and two rank and file were killed; a Lance-corporal and one private mortally wounded; and a Corporal and five men severely, two of whom afterwards underwent amputation.

In the meantime Lieut.-Col. Sutton's Brigade had ascended the heights by Mundells Krantz, on our extreme right; and Lieut.-Col. Yarborough, with the 91st regiment, occupied the left of the position; while the 12th, lying down in extended order across the open, watched the belt of bush in the right centre, occasionally exchanging a shot or two at intervals with a few fellows perched in the trees. The guns, however, were got into position opposite this, the enemy's only remaining point of occupation, and dropped shot and shell among them wherever they appeared, with such precision that they must have suffered severely, and were finally obliged to abandon their last stronghold.

During this, we were holding the position gained at such cost; and while we lay half hidden among the forest-clothed rocks, along the edge of the ridge, observed the branches of the trees above our heads cut in two,

and their trunks scored in all directions by the fire of the late encounter. Among the crevices of the rocks, which here were in cubical blocks of all sizes, from that of a large four storied house downwards, we found several of the enemy's caches, containing axes, bullet-moulds, lead, and cast bullets, and the usual assortment of ornaments and articles such as we generally found in every village.

After about two hours, the enemy,—who had again crept up to within range, at an angle of the forest which even the Fingoes had found impassable,—fired one or two shots at random into our cover, to see if we were still there, the balls dropping right among us. Presently a couple of black heads were slowly raised over the edge of a rock, but seeing us, were withdrawn so instantaneously that we had not time to fire. Some of our men lying flat on the large slabs of stone, and peering down into the deep forest on the sloping mountain side, made signs to me, pointing below, and quietly reaching their position, I had an opportunity rarely afforded of watching a party of Kaffirs cautiously advancing along the bottom of the thicket immediately below us, creeping stealthily through the underwood, perfectly naked, and armed with assegais and guns. Stopping every few feet to listen, they peered into the bush before them, their well greased bodies shining in the occasional gleams of sunshine that streamed down through the thick foliage of the trees, and again moved on, avoiding every rotten twig, and preserving a noiselessness perfectly marvellous. It was most exciting, as we lay crouched among the huge grey rocks, from which our bush dress was hardly distinguishable, to watch them pursuing their deadly mode of warfare in their own fastnesses. Our men waiting the moment to fire, had gradually brought the muzzles of their arms to bear; and without moving their heads,

and hardly drawing breath, silently indicated to each other the whereabouts of fresh comers.

With rifles pointed through the creepers at the edge of the rock on which we lay stretched, we waited with fingers on the trigger for a fair shot, and I fancied I could hear my heart beating. At a signal, bang went twenty muskets, echoing from crag to crag in the silent wood, and the treacherous savages met the death they had been plotting for us.

We still remained here for some hours, the General requiring the position to be held during his other movements; the men took out their pipes and smoked to allay their hunger, which they had no chance of satisfying until the night's bivouac, while an occasional bullet lodged in the trees around us, fired by some skulking Tottie or Kaffir. One or two of us were so fatigued that notwithstanding the roar of the big guns, we fell asleep.

At three in the afternoon the clouds again settled on the ridge, and the fog became so heavy that all further operations were at an end, and the enemy having evacuated all his positions, and being nowhere visible, we were withdrawn from our tiresome duty of occupation. The whole of the troops were called in, and assembled in column on the open; a mule waggon came down for the wounded, and we bivouacked for the night on the bare bleak ridge close by.

The troops moved mournfully about their duties, every soldier appearing to feel the heavy loss we had sustained; the cries and groans of the wounded, which could be heard in every part of the little camp, added to the general feeling of sadness; and, like a pall hanging over the gallant dead that lay in the

solitary tent, in front of which there slowly paced a sentinel, the cold dark clouds rested on the lonely peak, and enveloped us in a mist so dense that our evening fires were hardly visible at a few yards, and our moving figures loomed through it like giants. We went to take a farewell look at the bodies of our late gallant Chief, and poor Carey, as brave a young fellow as ever lived, highly talented, and beloved by us all. They lay side by side with the men who had fallen that day, the corpses ranged on the grass, each covered by a blanket; reverently uncovering their heads, we gazed silently on their familiar faces; the Colonel's was as tranquil as though he were sleeping, which, but for the blood that covered his uniform and hands, might have been supposed. A change had passed over poor Carey's. The men lay with fixed and rigid features, some with their stony eyes still open, or their lower jaws fallen; it was a mournful and touching spectacle. I could scarcely realize the death of two officers, whom I had daily met for years, and had only a few hours before conversed with in the full vigour of life. Slowly and silently we left the tent, and without speaking sought our own fires.

The wounded, who lay on their stretchers on the ground, received every possible attention; their own comrades, on such occasions, rough as they may appear, move gently about the sick man, anticipating such wants, and administering such comforts as are in their power, with a woman's delicacy and forethought. Poor Gordon, over whose head we had built a shelter of green boughs, suffered dreadful agonies all night. The doctors, when questioned as to his case, shook their heads in doubt; the ball had entered the outside of the right thigh, and, passing through it, entered the inside of the left one

fracturing the bone close to the socket, and leaving two frightful lacerated wounds. So close was the Kaffir who fired it, that Gordon had attempted to seize his gun.

Soon after dark a drizzling rain came on, and the wind swept piercingly cold over our lofty resting place; the men threw up little walls of the loose stones and rock that lay about, or dug holes in the softer parts, and piling the earth round them and large slabs of stone over, crept in for shelter, and all but the orderly officers and weary sentinels were soon slumbering after the fatigues of the day, in happy forgetfulness of its horrors.

A white frost covered the ground when we were roused at dawn by the bugle's reveillé; the clouds still hung round us, and rolled along in the deep valley beneath, while officers and men crowded indiscriminately round the few still burning fires in vain endeavours to warm their half frozen feet and fingers. The bodies of the dead were placed in a mule waggon for burial at Post Retief, fifteen miles across the table-land, for which place it set off, accompanied by a party of officers, who had obtained permission from the General to join in this last sad office. I followed slowly after them with a strong escort guarding the wounded, accompanied by our surgeon, Frazer. Poor Gordon, from the nature of his wounds, was unable to bear the motion of a waggon, and was carried on a stretcher the whole distance, by the men of his company.

As we proceeded across the wide grassy plain, its cheerfulness after the dusky bush, and the brilliant flowers, as they waved joyously in the bright morning sun, seemed in strange contrast with our sad cortege. The whole ridge literally glowed with gladiolus, amaranth, aphelexis, and a host of other beautiful flowers;

the slopes of the little Winterberg Mountain rising verdant from the plain, about half a mile off, were covered with patches of the scarlet gladiolus, which were so brilliant and thickly studded, that, as even the men observed, they looked like pieces of red cloth spread out on the grass. All along the way we gathered mushrooms in such quantities that we were soon laden with as many as we could conveniently carry. In one or two places belts of bush, running up from the wooded kloofs below, encroached on the green plain, and as Kaffir spies were hovering round, we kept out of musket range of the treacherous cover.

Heavy firing from the artillery in our rear now announced that our Division was again engaged, and we fervently hoped with happier results than the day before. After a few miles further we looked down on our right into the celebrated Kat River Valley, well known, as the birthplace of the Hottentot rebellion, and one of the finest and most fruitful districts in the whole colony. Surrounded by vast chains of fine mountains, this extensive valley spread its smiling uplands and fertile holms, picturesquely relieved by belts of valuable timber, and watered by the winding Kat River; the villages and farms now levelled with the ground, and silent and deserted except by prowling Kaffirs and wild beasts. The whole hill side was here covered with the Protea grandiflora, a bush about eight or ten feet high, very much resembling the rhododendron in leaf and general appearance, and bearing a large pink and white cup-shaped flower, something like an artichoke.

Gordon's sufferings were very great, though borne with a fortitude only equalled by his courage in the field; his thirst was insatiable. When about half way,

one of the stretcher poles broke in two; we had, however, taken the precaution to bring a spare stretcher, which was laid on the ground, the other placed gently on it, its poles withdrawn, and we went on again as before.

We were still four miles from the end of our march, when it became evident that we were going to have a mountain storm; the lowering sky deepened into an intense indigo behind the distant mountains; eddying clouds of sand, dry grass, and leaves, caught by successive whirlwinds, came sweeping along our desolate track, until a bright blinding flash shot from behind the dark peak of the Didama, and the oppressive silence was suddenly broken by a terrific peal of thunder, followed, before its prolonged echoes had ceased among the crags, by a downpour of hail and rain, such as we never before witnessed. The hailstones were literally the size of walnuts, and fell with such force that the horses became frantic, and in a couple of minutes we ourselves were soaked to the skin. As we entered a narrow glen, down which foamed a genuine Highland stream, the road became much rougher, and was most trying to the wounded men, who yelled with agony as the waggon jolted over the rocks; seeing me removing the large loose stones out of the way of the wheels, a private, named M'Coll, with his left arm in a bandage, after amputation of the fingers, jumped out and walked the rest of the way, assisting me with his one hand.

At a turn in the narrow road, the little fort appeared about half a mile before us, standing dreary and lone on a rising ground in the centre of an amphitheatre of dark mountains half hidden in the clouds. As we approached it a detachment of the 12th came out to meet us, and helped to carry the sufferers into the hospital, already

half full of wounded men. I was in time to take a last look at the bodies of our chief and poor Carey, which were laid out in the commissariat forage store, before the Sergeant-Major nailed down the hastily made coffins. The funeral will never be forgotten by those who were present. The thunder, mingled with the booming of the distant artillery, rolled grandly and solemnly among the mountains, as the motley groups from each regiment assembled in their worn and ragged uniforms. As the rough deal coffins were borne out, the "firing party," dripping wet, and covered with mud, "presented arms," the officers uncovered, and we marched in slow time out of the gate and down the road, the Pipers playing the mournful and touching "Highland Lament," to where the graves had been dug, a few hundred yards from the post, and close to three others newly made, the last resting place of our gallant men who had fallen on the 16th of October.

The funeral service was read by Captain Duff, the men with swarthy faces, and tattered dress, standing round, resting on their "arms reversed," while the thunder rolled unceasingly, and the inky black clouds threatened another downpour.

Captain Carey, C.M.R., stood by the grave side of his brave young kinsman, and as the bodies were lowered into the graves and solemnly committed to the earth, every one was visibly affected; the customary military honours were paid; three times the roar of a hundred muskets reverberated among the hills; the last faint echo died away in the distance; the hoarse word of command broke up the motionless group; one after another we stepped to the grave sides to take a farewell look; and marched back in silence to the Fort.

During our absence, a miserable barrack room with roughly paved floor, and smoke blackened rafters, had been hastily cleared for poor Gordon, into which we carefully bore him, and adding every obtainable blanket or plaid to the thin straw mattress, and doing all in our very limited power to cheer him and alleviate his sufferings, left him for the night with his trusty and attached servant Stuart.

On entering the crowded hospital, the groans of the wounded men were heart-rending, and their sufferings most acute, the heat of the climate and the loathsome flies and vermin (which no care can keep away from the smallest wound), adding to their misery. A Sergeant of the 12th and one of the 74th had each undergone amputation of the leg, and hardly appeared to understand our words of encouragement. We learned from one or two, who spoke feelingly of his kindness, that our late gallant chief had personally visited, and inquired into the wants of the sick; the very evening before he was killed (when it will be remembered he rode over from our camp), and the commissariat officer of the post showed us an order the Colonel had written on the spot, for every possible comfort for the wounded—wine, porter, sago, tea, milk, &c., to be provided at his own expense and responsibility. These were the last words he ever wrote.

We found Ricketts of the 91st, who was mentioned as dangerously wounded on the 14th of October, in the Waterkloof, lying alone in a small room in a very precarious state; he had no belief whatever in his danger, and talked gaily of what he should do when he got out again—though constantly interrupted by coughing and spitting blood, which bubbled out of the wound in his chest at every breath.

The hospitable detachment gave us, notwithstanding the great scarcity of provisions, a more substantial meal than we had seen for a long time, to which we sat down twenty-one in number, at a long deal table, in a bare whitewashed room; but as our kind entertainers had been unexpectedly sent up to the empty fort from the field in "patrol order," it was a much more difficult affair to provide a dinner service than a dinner. At night we lay in our blankets on the floor, side by side, and as we listened to the mountain storm raging without, congratulated ourselves on sleeping under a roof, a luxury we had only once before enjoyed since leaving Cork.

We visited Gordon again in the morning before starting for the camp, and assisted the surgeon to dress his wounds and arrange his bed; and sat as long as we possibly could wiping his brow and moistening his lips. On leaving, he begged us to come over as often as we could to see him during his probable long confinement in this lonely place, which we promised to do, but never saw him again. After three days of excruciating agony, the broken limb suddenly mortified, and he was carried off in a few hours; so died this young soldier, alone in a wild mountain fort, thousands of miles away from home and relatives, with only a servant to witness his last moments.

Poor Ricketts, whose exquisite songs had so often enlivened our long evenings, died the same day, having been gradually sinking for some time previously. His death, which occurred some hours the first, was purposely kept from Gordon, but the sound of the funeral volleys reached his ear, and in a quiet voice he blamed his servant for not telling him of it; in two hours after, a like salute was fired over his own grave. His loss was

sincerely mourned both by officers and men, his honest sterling qualities, kindly heart, and dauntless bravery in the field having endeared him to all.

Having commissariat cattle to escort to the camp for the troops, I gave them in charge of the Fingoes, following in rear with the escort. When little more than half-way back to where we had left our camp, we saw the whole Division about two miles off, with its long retinue of waggons, trekking across the open plain, and while wondering what it could mean, a mounted express rode up, with an order from the General for us to continue on the road as far as the top of the Blinkwater Pass, where we halted till the division came up; eager to hear the results of their operations on the previous day.

They had cleared the whole of the Waterkloof Range, the 12th, 74th, 91st, and Levies, having succeeded in driving the enemy from the forest, with the exception of a few small scattered parties (doubtless in attendance on the wounded), who played at hide and seek with the wearied troops, and baffled all attempts to dislodge them. They had, however, suffered very severely; twenty bodies were found, and a much greater number must have fallen in the thick bush from the admirable practice of the howitzers. On our side, Captain Davenish, of the Levies, was mortally wounded, and seven men of different regiments more or less severely.

The road down the hill was almost impassable after the heavy rain; tremendous gullies, in many places four feet deep, constantly threatened to overturn the waggons, and it was several hours before we reached our old camp in the Blinkwater valley. It had been held in the interim by detachments of the 2nd and 6th regiments, which

now marched out on one side for Fort Beaufort, as we entered at another. We were rejoiced to find ourselves once more under canvas. In the evening the following Division Order, on the death of our late Colonel, was published in camp:—

"*Camp Blinkwater, November* 9, 1851.

"It is with the deepest regret that Major-General Somerset announces to the Division the death of Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, commanding the 74th Highlanders.

"Lieut.-Col. Fordyce fell, mortally wounded, in action with the enemy, on the morning of the 6th, and died on the field.

"From the period of the 74th Highlanders having joined the 1st Division, their high state of discipline and efficiency at once showed to the Major-General the value of Lieut.-Col. Fordyce as a commanding officer; the subsequent period, during which the Major-General had been in daily intercourse with Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, so constantly engaged against the enemy in the field, had tended to increase, in the highest degree, the opinion which the Major-General had formed of Lieut.-Col. Fordyce as a commander of the highest order, and as one of her Majesty's ablest officers, whom he now so deeply laments (while he truly sympathizes with the 74th Highlanders in their irreparable loss) as an esteemed brother soldier. * * * *

"By command,

"C. H. BELL,

"Lieutenant, Field Adjutant, 1st Division."

This was followed a few days afterwards by the subjoined General Order:—

"GENERAL ORDER, No. 197.

"*Head Quarters, King William's Town,*
"*November* 13, 1851.

"The Commander-in-chief has this day received the report from Major-General Somerset that the gallant and enterprising Lieut.-Col. Fordyce, 74th Highlanders, has fallen in action with the enemy on the 6th instant. His loss to her Majesty's service is a severe one, and his Excellency conceives he cannot express his regret in terms more applicable, than in the Division Order of Major-General Somerset, which is herewith published.

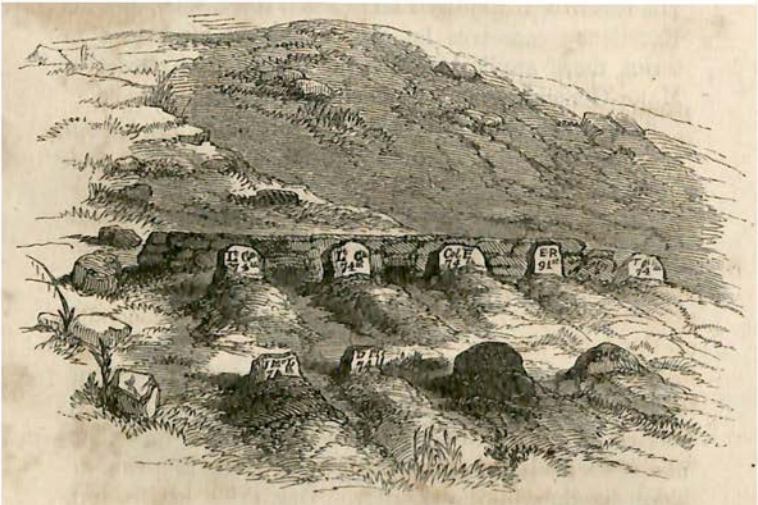
"Gallantly thus falling in the service of his Queen and country will perpetuate the memory of Lieut.-Col. Fordyce.

"The service has also to regret the loss of Lieutenant Carey, 74th Highlanders, a rising and promising officer.

(Signed) "A. J. CLOETE, Lieutenant-Colonel,
"Deputy Quartermaster-General."

The day following was Sunday, and a small party of us having got leave set off on horseback to attend divine service at Fort Beaufort, this being the first time that any of us had had an opportunity of going to a church since landing in the country. Our dress excited no other emotion than respect among the well-dressed congregation, though our weather-stained and soiled uniform, patched with leather and every kind of cloth, and our worn-out boots burnt to a reddish brown, looked strangely out of place. As we once more heard the service read and chanted, a host of thoughts came

crowding on my mind of home, and bygone days and scenes, with a feeling of thankfulness at having been preserved through so many dangers.



THE GRAVES AT POST RETIEF.

CHAPTER VIII.

CATTLE LIFTING—KAFFIR AND FINGO CUSTOMS, ETC.

Nov. 18th.—Between ten and eleven in the forenoon, parade and drill having been got over as usual in the early morning, the camp, in shirt sleeves, was hushed in its first siesta; we were all lying, like so many cucumbers under frames, in our sultry tents, which, in spite of wet blankets and "raised walls," were but a degree more bearable than the scorching summer sun outside, when distant shots were suddenly heard, and an alarm was given of an attack on the cattle out grazing at the foot of the hills, about a mile from the sentries. In an instant all were astir, a party of Cape Corps were in the saddle, and followed by a yelling posse of naked Fingoes on bare-backed horses, thundered past us as we stood outside the lines, telescope in hand.

A body of Kaffirs, who must have descended from the mountains before daylight, had concealed themselves in a deep sluit, or empty watercourse, running through the best pasturage, and waiting until the cattle had got between them and the hills, rushed out, and, after an ineffectual resistance from the outlying picquet of Levies, two of whom were wounded, had gone off at full gallop

with the whole, which we now saw them driving in three separate herds up the grassy sides of the mountain; the ascent, however, was fortunately so steep that our horsemen had reached its foot before the Kaffirs were half way up; a very pretty skirmish took place through the bushes, and the slope was soon thickly dotted with puffs of blue smoke. The cattle were recaptured and brought in, with the exception of some dozen which had escaped into the bush. The trembling herdsmen got a reprimand, and a warning to keep nearer home in future. Many of the Hottentot women in camp seemed by no means pleased at the issue of the chase, and in fact, whenever they dared express it, their sympathies were evidently on the side of the enemy.

The merry Fingoes who had borne the most conspicuous part in this little affair, as a matter of course, made it an excuse for a jollification, and after sunset their camp, some few hundred yards from ours, resounded with loud shrieks and laughter, and their quaint and striking choruses, with the thumping obligato accompaniment, rose above every other sound in the evening air. It was a constant amusement to us to visit these happy good-natured fellows when in standing camp, and see their mode of life, which is exactly like that of the Kaffir in times of peace; their extraordinary habits and customs are most interesting. On this occasion, finding a blanketed group sitting apart in a circle smoking the *dagha* before described, I squatted down at their invitation, cross-legged, in the ring, and receiving the rude cow-horn pipe in my turn, took a pull at its capacious mouth, coughing violently at the suffocating fumes, as indeed they all did more or less, and after tasting the nasty decoction of bark which followed round in a calabash, took the politely-proffered spitting-tube

of my next neighbour, signally failing, however, in the orthodox whistle, to the unbounded delight of the Fingoes, whose hearty ringing laughter was most contagious.

In this way they sat and passed the time until their grand banquet was ready, which we saw preparing on the fire in the shape of a large three-legged iron pot full of tripe and offal, from which issued a reeking steam of most unsavoury odour. Others with long festoons of unwashed intestines in their hands roasted them bit by bit on the glowing embers, and holding the frizzling end between their teeth cut it off with their sharp assegais so closely as to make one quake for the safety of their protuberant lips; after helping himself, the envied owner would do a few inches more for his neighbour, sticking it into his open mouth for him burning hot, and sever it in like manner.

The fondness of the Fingo for animal food is extraordinary, and when in the field he will do almost anything to obtain it; the daily ration is a mere trifle to him, serving only to whet his appetite, and in spite of the consequent severe self-punishment of being two days without, he cannot resist devouring the whole issue of "three days' rations" at one glorious meal. Marrow bones, however, are his especial weakness, and it is quite a picture to watch him roasting them in the hot wood ashes, affectionately turning them over, his happy face all beaming with oil and smiles, and then breaking the unctuous luxuries between two smooth stones, which, as well as the bones, are licked perfectly clean, and after a minute and repeated inspection reluctantly thrown away with a sigh of regret.

Notwithstanding this propensity for flesh, the Fingo, like the Kaffir, seldom touches it in time of peace, but

keeps his cattle to look at and admire, living entirely on pumpkins, maize, Kaffir-corn, roots, and milk. The greater part of the latter is obtained from goats, of which they frequently possess very large flocks; it is never used except sour, a small quantity being always retained in the milking vessels to turn the new milk. It is most excellent; and in spite of the black, dirty looking grass baskets in which they keep it, we never could resist the cool refreshing draught. They believe that if the milk of a cow or goat is drunk in its natural state, the animal will at once cease to give any more.

As to religion, the notions of a people whose language does not contain a single word to express a Deity, may naturally be supposed to be very vague. The general belief with regard to the Creation, at least of those who think about it at all, is, that from a large cave (*Uhlanga*)* in the far East, where the very finest specimens of every production of the world grow of their own accord, all that moves on the face of the earth originally proceeded. Cattle first, and then man; the different animals, birds, fishes, &c., being subsequently turned loose for their joint use and amusement. Through some unaccountable mistake, however, one fine day, the cattle not being sufficiently wide awake, allowed themselves to be circumvented and taken prisoners by the men, and have ever since been kept in subjection, ranking merely as second in the scale of beings.

Since the arrival of the white man in the country, these people have learned something of the existence of an invisible God under the title of Utixo* (an obsolete Hottentot word, meaning "my arm" or "safeguard"), though, as it is invariably used like the Italian

* See Ayliff's Vocabulary.

"Felicita," or "Viva," after sneezing, it is very doubtful what idea they connect with it.

Superstition enters largely into their customs; they not only believe in spirits, and resort to the mummery and incantations of "witch doctors" to avert their evil influence, and wear charms to protect them from sickness, misfortunes, or violent deaths, but lest they should injure the prospects of their husbands or male relations, the women are prohibited from ever mentioning their names or cognomens, which are always verbs or nouns, with fanciful prefixes or terminations, one woman making use of a word which another of a different family dare not utter, and for which she has always to substitute one widely differing from that in use among the men. For instance, a woman whose husband's name is a compound or derivation of *Umoya* (air), instead of the forbidden word uses *Umklengetwa;* in like manner for *Inkwenkwe* (a boy), *Ixagi;* for *Ipupa* (a dream) *Itongo,* and so on.

This singular custom (called "uku'hlonipa") greatly increases the difficulty of learning this very complicated language, for as all Kaffir proper names are thus formed, and every man has from three to eight wives, or more, each with their own extensive circle of male kinsmen, and a woman must not use a word which contains the sound even of any of their names, its construction becomes doubly involved. The peculiar clicks, also, are another impediment to be overcome by the learner. The letters *c*, *q*, and *x*, represent three different sounds (such as a driver uses to encourage his horses), denominated respectively "dental," "palatal," and "lateral" clicks, which, when repeated in a double or treble click in the same word, as "ukunycabagcazela," to tremble; "uquqoqo," the wind-

pipe, "Ukuqupukaquka," changeableness, all uttered by the Kaffir with the greatest clearness and fluency, add to the striking sound of his beautiful language, every syllable of which ends with a vowel, and is spoken with a most musical intonation, dwelling generally on the penultimate vowel in a very remarkable manner. In its construction it is entirely a language of ever-varying prefixes, by which verbs, nouns, and pronouns, are conjugated, declined, and combined. Each of the twelve declensions of nouns has its own set of prefixes, which, also, by a singular and harmonious rule, govern the sound of the prefixes of the verb, or other words in the sentence connected with it, and which are thus assimilated into what is termed the euphonic concord, the third person of the pronoun, for instance, having 144 different prefixes to be used in combination with different words. On the proper use of these, no easy matter, the correct speaking of the language entirely depends, and in the study of it the European experiences the greatest conceivable trouble with the least satisfactory results to be found in the acquisition of any language under the sun, as any one who attempts it will soon confess. The similarity between the Kaffir and Fingo languages is so exact, they may be called one, there being no greater difference than there is between Highland and Lowland Scotch, if indeed as much.

The Fingoes are, in reality, only one of the three sections of the original Kaffir race, having been driven from their position on the north-eastern boundary of Kaffirland by the other tribes, who made incessant war upon them, in which many thousands were killed; the rest, having unluckily taken refuge in the territory of Hintza, a Kaffir chief, were enslaved by him, and kept in the most barbarous servitude. Sir Benjamin

D'Urban, however, set them free in 1835, and assigned them a territory within the country lying between the Kei, Klip-Plat and Keiskamma Rivers, and they have, in consequence, ever since remained our faithful and active allies.

The Kaffirs are, undoubtedly, one of the finest races of savages in existence, and of a physical type very different from, and superior to all other South African races. Their customs and institutions also are, in many cases, so peculiar and remarkable, exhibiting strong traces of similarity to the wandering tribes of Arabia, that they have naturally led to the supposition of a distinct origin, and there is certainly much to confirm the belief that they are descendants of Ishmaelite tribes, who have wandered down the east coast by the Red Sea. In their divisions and sub-divisions into tribes and families, their system is patriarchal; their wealth, like that of the Arabs and other nomadic tribes of the east, consists almost entirely of flocks and herds, and in their abhorrence of pork they are as cordial as the most devout Mussulman or Jew. Polygamy is common, and what is most remarkable, circumcision is regularly performed by the Kaffirs, and about the age of fourteen, which has a singular correspondence with the recorded fact that Ishmael himself was in his fourteenth year when circumcised with Abraham. It is however, with them, a mere custom, and not a religious rite. They say they do it because their fathers did it before them. After the operation has been performed, the youths cover their bodies with white clay, and live apart for some days in huts built at a distance from the village. Many other traits, of Eastern origin, might be adduced, such as kissing the feet; shaving the head; either as a sign of grief, or while under a vow; the use

of skins as bottles, for milk, &c. and of goads; in driving cattle, which, however *follow* the chief herdsman, who leads them from one pasture to another, calling them generally by name; the piling up stones before going out on an expedition; and offering burnt sacrifices on the commencement of a war, which, with many others, are the more conclusive as combined evidence in confirmation of the theory, as they are confined to the Kaffir race alone in South Africa. Polygamy is only restricted by the bovine riches of the men. A chief, or a wealthy individual, has generally seven or eight wives at least (all living amicably together), whom he has purchased from his various fathers-in-law, for certain numbers of oxen, in proportion to the rank and attractions of the ladies. This is left to the heads of the tribe to settle, and to ensure a fair valuation, the bride in prospect, "in native beauty clad," is made to walk round a ring of influential old gentlemen appraisers, seated on the ground, before each of whom she stops a few minutes; when, having been criticised by the circle, she retires, and a consultation is held to fix the number of cattle her charms are worth, the decision being final and without appeal either for father or suitor. The Kaffir women are universally well made, their symmetry being displayed to the greatest advantage by the most lofty and easy carriage; their teeth are brilliantly white, and moreover they preserve a degree of modesty far above the depraved Hottentots, though the latter boast the superior refinement of clothing.

It may be interesting, by the way, to state how their children are trained to that duplicity and cunning so much prized among them. As soon almost as they can run they are initiated into petty acts of theft; papas and mammas descanting together on the cleverness and

proficiency of their respective children, will each back their own to steal something from the other's hut before sundown; the most successful competitor being warmly applauded. That they should succeed at all, when the owner of the hut to be plundered, is of course, on the look out, seems marvellous, but I was assured by a respectable Boer, that he had seen the children accomplish feats of this kind, bringing off articles of bulk and value, notwithstanding the whole family on whom the depredation was to be committed were on their guard. Lying also is another native accomplishment held in high esteem, and as diligently cultivated; with what success the celebrity of some of their first chiefs and counsellors in this form of diplomacy, bears ample witness.

The only covering worn by the Kaffir is the well-known kaross, which supplies the place of our own plaid; it consists of different skins; that of the tiger, is a distinctive mark of chieftainship, and not allowed to be worn by any other class; among the lower ranks a coarse blanket is now generally substituted. The married women sometimes wear a very small forked apron of leather, adorned with beads, over their breasts, and the wives of royalty have the privilege of a peculiar head-dress of fur, one of which, in my possession, taken from the Royal Gaika Kraal, on the Amatolas, is like a large loose fez, with the fur outside, turned up and ornamented with small beads, and on each side long broad "ribbons" of fur tipped with tiger skin. In necklaces, armlets, &c., they show great taste and ingenuity, and some of them are very interesting; here again the tiger's teeth are appropriated to aristocratic use; one, which was cut from the neck of a dying chief, and presented to me at the time, consists of alternate

bunches of teeth and large white beads, on a cluster of strings of small black ones. Another is composed entirely of the lower joints of human finger bones strung through the knuckles, to the number of twenty-seven.

Both races, as is also usual with the Arabs, tattoo their chests and arms in a kind of serrated pattern; and the women, in addition, use a kind of red clay mixed with fat to smear their bodies and paint their faces, also daubing and moulding their crisp hair with it into clay ringlets, which have a very singular appearance. Sometimes they sprinkle their hair, after smearing it with fat, with glittering particles of mica, great quantities of which are left after heavy rains in the ruts and gullies of the roads. The men stick through their ears a straw, a porcupine's quill, or ostrich feather; and both Kaffirs and Fingoes use a strap or belt round their naked waist, called "lambele," which they tighten when hungry and unable to procure food.

Although, as stated above, their flocks and herds constitute their chief wealth, and cattle hold the highest place in their estimation, being supposed to have been created superior to man at first, and none but the grown up males are allowed the honour of milking them, or even entering the kraal, &c.; yet, in time of peace they never touch flesh, unless it be game, living almost entirely on milk, fruit, and vegetables, with berries, leaves, and roots, of various kinds; the principal of these are the Indian corn or mealies, *Amazimba* or Kaffir corn (a species of *Sorghum*), and the root of the Noë Boom tree,* very like a coarse stringy turnip.

Game they often kill with the knob-keerie, a short club, two or three feet long, generally made out of an olive stock, with a part of the heavy root attached, or

* Cussonia Thyrsiflora.

shaped out of rhinoceros' horn, which they throw with wonderful force and accuracy, and can knock down a man as well as kill a hare or buck, at twenty or thirty yards, with the greatest certainty.

Their other and most formidable weapon is the assegai, of which each one in war-time carries a bundle of seven, loosely tied together by a thong or rheim of hide attached to a long "charm stick." One of these is large and heavy, for stabbing, with a broad blade or iron head a foot or eighteen inches long, and a shaft much shorter and stouter than the rest, which are used for throwing. They hurl them with incredible force; and, as I have myself seen, can send them clean through a man's body. We often used to put up a cap or other small article on a bush when in camp, for our friends the Fingoes, to try their skill at: they made excellent practice at thirty or forty yards, and could cast them with sufficient force to annoy a body of men at nearly double that distance, though their aim at a single individual would be, of course, uncertain.

With these effective weapons, serving both as bayonet and javelin in the hands of an athletic, sagacious, and undaunted race, who are trained from infancy to their use; combined with the musket, which they quickly learned to handle with considerable precision; and the adoption of just as much of military tactics and system (acquired from the Cape Corps and Kaffir Police deserters), as improved without hampering their skirmishing mode of bush-fighting; added to a marvellous concert and unity in their movements, the Kaffirs were a most formidable foe even to the flower of the British troops, who had to encounter and storm them in their own natural fortresses, rendered almost inaccessible by the dense bush of impenetrable thorns, &c.; too succulent

to be burnt, yet affording to the crawling native, the opportunity of lurking in unexpected ambuscade at every point.

Such fearful odds against so comparative a handful of troops, not to mention the excessive hardships, privations, and vicissitudes of climate, render it less a matter of surprise that complete success was for a time delayed, than that it was ever ultimately achieved.

KAFFIR.

CHAPTER IX.

NIGHT ATTACK ON CAMP.—POST RETIEF.

On the night of the 20th, the Kaffirs who, since their unsuccessful raid, had been constantly hovering about in small parties on the hill sides, watching our cattle and our movements, treated us at midnight with a volley into the middle of our encampment, which woke us suddenly from our first sleep; the bugles sounded the "assembly," and we had to tumble out of bed. As I groped about in the dark for my clothes, I felt a peculiar sensation of unprotectedness, in my night-shirt, as the balls whistled past the tent, not having been under fire before in that costume; something of the same sort of feeling prompted B——r, on a later occasion, in crossing the enemy's line of fire, to pull his jacket collar up on the exposed side of his face as a protection. After several frantic attempts to unhook my tent door, tightly contracted by the dew, I had to crawl out below, and found the men drawn up on their own lines as if they had been there all night. A few shots were fired from the river bank, which however did no harm, and were silenced by the sentries without our aid; the skulking thieves, frightened at the hornet's nest they had disturbed, taking

themselves off at once. In five minutes after we were dismissed, the camp was still as death, and in the morning I felt uncertain, on first waking, whether the whole had not been a dream.

His Excellency the Governor-General was at this time preparing a force to move across the Kei into Kreli's country, to punish that chief for robbing the traders, treacherously harbouring the fugitive Kaffirs and their cattle, and while professing the most friendly feelings and intentions towards us, aiding and abetting a war with which he was in no way identified.

That the Colony might be properly defended during the absence of so large a portion of the army as must necessarily be required for such an expedition, the following dispositions of the troops were ordered to be at once carried into effect for the formation of the frontier line of defence,—the 74th Highlanders and 91st regiment, with the Local Mounted and Fingo Levies, to be posted in Fort Beaufort and the district, under Lieut.-Col. Yarborough; the 12th regiment with detachments of Irregulars, as a line of patrol from Fort Brown to the mouth of the Great Fish River, under Lieut.-Col. Perceval; and a detachment at Fort Peddie, under Major Wilmot, R.A. This arrangement of course broke up our standing camp, and in the general movement of the troops, I found myself under orders for Post Retief, in the Winterberg Mountains, to accompany Bruce, appointed to that command; the detachment of the 12th, then garrisoning it, rejoining their regiment in the Albany district. As it was probable we might be imprisoned in that solitary place for six months at least, cut off during the absence of the expedition from all communication with the world, and as we had nothing with us in camp beyond the clothes on our backs and the contents of

our saddle bags, it was necessary to make some preparation for our change of quarters, and having to march for our destination at daylight next morning, I set off at once with a mounted servant for Beaufort to get such supplies and necessaries as were absolutely required, taking advantage of the escort just starting with the mail.

After hastily performing my errand and with some difficulty getting a waggon and oxen to return with me, I found to my annoyance that owing to the indolence or probably intended treachery of the driver, who kept me waiting two hours for his oxen, I was too late to join a party going out to the camp with waggons, and there being no escort to be obtained from Fort Beaufort, I had no alternative, as our early march from the Blinkwater next morning rendered my return that evening imperative, but to start a little before dusk accompanied only by the servant. We had got about half way or a little more, and had entered the most bushy and dangerous part of the road when it fell nearly dark, the sheet lightning becoming most brilliant. I rode along by the side of the oxen in the narrow track, and was in the act of lighting my second cheroot, when a volley was suddenly poured into us from the bush along the edge of the river on our right, so close as to blind me for an instant with the flash; one of the oxen, which were on my left, dropt down dead, and two more rolled over wounded, while the waggon was struck in half a dozen different places; the rest of the terrified cattle faced round kicking and plunging, got their legs over the trektow, and wound themselves into an inextricable mess. The driver and leader, one a Totty, the other a Ghonah, either purposely or from fear refused to assist in ex-

tricating them, and when I threatened them with my pistol, bolted into the bush on the other side of the road and disappeared. Left to our own devices, we made an ineffectual attempt to cut out the dead and wounded oxen from the trektow with a blunt tobacco knife, the Kaffirs firing at us from the bush all the time, but found it utterly impossible; they now completely surrounded us, forming across the road in front and rear, and firing in quick succession, one shot striking the cantle of my saddle, and another wounding my horse in the head, which made him almost unmanageable; it was madness to stand to be shot at by so many guns, so we determined to make a dash for the camp, and with a shout rode right at the fellows in front, who as I fired my second pistol jumped aside and let us pass, though a parting shower of bullets, as we galloped off, made the dust fly from the road under our horses' feet. In less than five minutes after reaching the camp, a party of Fingoes had turned out, and quickly getting a span of oxen together, we returned to the rescue of the unfortunate waggon at a sharp trot, most of the Fingoes keeping up with the horses the whole two miles. Though the oxen were gone, our speedy return prevented the rascals destroying or ransacking the waggon, from which they had only taken a box of cheroots and a case of brandy; the former, as we afterwards discovered by their spoor, they had chopped up into tobacco, and on the latter they had got so drunk that they lost two of the bullocks, which, as Bruce and I had to pay for the missing ones out of our own pockets, we were only too glad to recover. The dead ox was quickly skinned and cut up by the Fingoes, who, finding to their surprise I did not want it for my own use, regarded the affair from that

moment as a great lark, and sat up all night eating beef. To ourselves the result was not so satisfactory, having subsequently to pay £70 for the oxen.

After accomplishing the ascent of the Blinkwater Pass, which we had hoped not to have seen again for some time, we, late the next day, came in sight of the little fort, which in the setting sun, with its background of green and purple mountains, distinctly defined against the clear sky, looked now as bright and cheerful as it had loomed dark and gloomy on our former melancholy visit.

Our approach caused an evident commotion in the little garrison, to whom our coming, and their consequent "relief," were entirely unknown.

About 800 yards from the post, a quantity of old trampled wheat-straw was pointed out to us, scattered along the roadside, where it had been left by the enemy, since the 6th of February, on which day they had thrashed out a whole stack in sight of the fort, at that time occupied by the Burghers and Dutch, with their families and herds. A party of about 700 or 800 Kaffirs and Hottentots, who had first attacked the post, took possession of the little water-mill out of musket shot from the walls, and their women, to the number of about 150, coolly commenced thrashing out the corn, which they took away with them in a waggon, while the men from the cover of the rocks and some old quarries, kept up a constant fire on the fort, the interior of which from its absurd position, was entirely commanded and raked from a hill within half musket range, so that no one dare move across the yard, or show himself within the walls. The besieged inmates were almost entirely without food or water, having hurriedly taken refuge from their adjacent farms on the first alarm. Three days afterwards, relief arrived;

Commander Bowker, with 250 men, fell upon the enemy in rear, and drove them off after a fight of three hours. The walls and gates showed innumerable bullet marks, thickest round the windows and loop-holes, and in many the balls still sticking in the woodwork.

Post Retief was formerly a farm house (parts of which are still remaining, and built into the present walls of the fort) belonging to Piet Retief, a distinguished Field Cornet of the Winterberg district, who, while in treaty with Dingan, king of the Zulus, for a grant of territory, near Natal, for the settlement of the Dutch Border colonists, of whom he was Governor and Commander-in-chief, was barbarously murdered with his companions, by that prince, in the beginning of 1838, and while actually partaking of his treacherous hospitality.

We found the interior space, or barrack-square, almost impassable after rain, having been used for many months as a cattle kraal, the dung lying two or three feet thick. The removal of this was at once commenced upon, and men and waggons were busily employed each day until the steps up to the quarters, were again brought to light, and the oxen were no longer able to look in upon us at mess. The vrouws with their dirty children, pigs, poultry and lumber, were bundled out of the Fort; the rooms white-washed and converted into soldiers' quarters once more; the private dung-heaps at each door made into one large conglomerate outside the walls, and the place put into thorough order in less time than it would have taken one of the lazy Dutchmen to comprehend the possibility of such a reform.

On the 30th of November, General Somerset arrived with about 500 men, at Whittlesea, the most remote of the frontier posts, and the following day, having been joined by Captain Tylden's force, marched through Tambookie

Land to the Umvani, where, on the 3rd of December, he was joined by Colonel Mackinnon's party from King William's Town, making his force amount to about 3000 men, with three guns. Lieut.-Col. Eyre with about 1000 men moved, two days later, on the missionary settlement of Butterworth, so that the enemy's attention being first attracted to the General's Division, the move on that station might be effected without danger to the inhabitants from Kreli's people, and the two forces then moved along the course of the Kei co-operating with each other.

On Sunday we had divine service performed by the Rev. J. Wilson, a clergyman of the Church of England, who having been a resident in the beleaguered fort, had, like Patrick Walker at the siege of Derry, taken his share of duty with the little garrison, mounting guard, and standing sentry with his musket like the rest. The best of the men's barrack rooms served for a church, and a large hand-bell having been rung outside to summon the few settlers living within musket-shot of the walls, the gates were locked. The walls of our humble church were hung round with battered arms, patched accoutrements, and water canteens, haversacs, and all the equipments of the field; the congregation of soldiers and settlers was large and most attentive; the "prayers for the ending of the war," and for the "sick and wounded within these walls," forcibly reminding us of our position, so different from that of the congregations at that hour assembled in the peaceful villages at home.

The change from the field to quarters was so great that we could not get over the novelty of sitting down, to chairs and tables at our meals, or sleeping on a bedstead and between sheets, and at first felt much astonishment each morning on awaking to find ourselves in

bed in a barrack-room, though the said barrack-room was nothing more than four whitewashed walls, a floor of unhewn stones, a roof of naked rafters well browned with wood smoke, decorated, just over my bed, with a couple of swallows' nests, the birds having taken a dirty advantage of the broken window. The sense of suffocation at night, after so many months sleeping in the open air, was such that we found it impossible to sleep without every door and window wide open.

Our circle consisted of Bruce and myself; Dr. Warden the assistant-surgeon; the worthy Chaplain, and a commissariat officer, Mr. Hedley; totally isolated from the world, except at long intervals, we were now locked up in the little mountain fort 5000 feet above the level of the sea, and, with the exception of a few Dutch Laagers, thirty miles from any human habitation but those of hostile Kaffirs. Our little force was not more than seventy rank and file.

We had not been here more than two or three days, when the Kaffirs swept off a Boer's cattle grazing about three miles off; we saw them through the glass ascending the steep side of the lofty Didama, but as they were already more than half way up, and the distance to the foot of the ascent was at least four miles, we had to content ourselves with watching them; for by the time we could have got about half way, they would have been safely hidden in the extensive Zuurberg forest, on the other side of the ridge. There were about forty Kaffirs urging the cattle up the mountain side, and we could distinguish the forms of others covering their ascent, and crowning the crags on the summit. In the evening, soon after dark, as we sat smoking and chatting round the open hearth, on which blazed a cheerful wood fire, often very acceptable in the evenings of this

lofty region, distant shots were heard, and the sentry on the walls reported firing at the nearest Laager, about a mile off, and at the same time two Burghers, living close outside the gates, having been admitted, brought word that the enemy were attacking the Laager, and they would all be cut off without immediate assistance. Bruce, accordingly, sent me off at once with a party of twenty-five men: the night was so dark, that when outside the gates we hardly knew which way to move, until the flashes of muskets in the direction of the Laager showed us to what point to steer. On approaching the place, the moon, which had been hidden by a mass of dark clouds, suddenly shone out clear as day, and at the same moment we were fired upon from the rocks on our left, just above the huts of the Fingo herds, a few balls whistling past us, though after our shots in reply no one dead or alive was to be seen. Having with some difficulty satisfied the suspicious Dutchman on sentry, we passed along the side of the house, which was pierced with narrow loop-holes, the windows being all bricked up, and leaving the men outside for a few moments, I was admitted through some out-works of timber and mud walls, likewise crenelled for musketry, and found myself in a large, low, dirty room, with sacks of meal and corn, furniture, barrels, and all sorts of supplies piled on every side, and a crowd of Dutch men, women, and children, the former in round jackets and broad-brimmed hats, with cow-horn powder flasks at their sides, and immense roers in their hands, all jabbering at once; while the latter squatted round the fire half dressed, or peeped out of the different beds allotted to each family.

It appeared that the Kaffirs had endeavoured to carry off the sheep and cattle from the kraal, but the unex-

pected resistance, and our equally unlooked for reinforcement, had obliged them to abandon the attempt.

After the proferred "bidgte sopie," or wee dram of "Cape Smoke," which it would have been bad manners, if not bad taste, to have refused, we crossed the stream at the garden foot, and made our way to a second Laager, a mile further, where firing had also been heard; one of the Boers accompanying us as guide, and hailing the sentries in Dutch and Kaffir on our approach. Here they were more strongly fortified, a flanking block house and "covered way" rendering the defences complete. As at the last farm, we found all the people sitting up in a state of fear and excitement, the Boers and roers as before. Several Kaffirs had shortly before been seen hovering about; the dogs giving tongue in a manner not to be mistaken; but after making a circuit of the whole place, we found no one, and having shown ourselves sufficiently in case any of the enemy should be lurking about, we returned to the house. The people were delighted to have the troops with them in such an isolated position, and were very anxious that a part at any rate should remain all night; the "sopie" had again to be taken and no heeltaps; waiting till the setting moon dipped behind the hills, and all was once more in darkness, we silently moved off by a bridle path, and without a sound or a word regained the fort, so that any spies lurking about the Laagers could not possibly tell we were not still there.

For some days we made patrols in different directions round the country, constantly meeting with a magnificent pair of secretary birds, which appeared to move in a circle of about a mile radius from the post, and became like familiar friends. We visited the remaining two of the inhabited houses, the inmates of which we found in

a state of barricade and constant alarm, guns loaded and capped standing in the corners of the rooms, and the labourers working close to the house with their roers by their sides; and one day made an excursion with a waggon to a ruined school-house, in a lonely position at the foot of a lofty mountain, from which we took the liberty of borrowing the forms and tables for our unfurnished lodgings in the Fort. Nothing could be more desolate and melancholy than the deserted building; the doors creaked in the wind, swallows and grey spreuwe had built their nests in every corner of the schoolroom, forlorn spelling books and catechisms lay strewed about the ground, imprinted with the footsteps of wolves and jackals, and the broken windows were darkened by a rank growth of jungle and weeds.

One day soon after this, as we were returning from covering the descent of a mounted patrol into the Kat River valley, getting occasional shots as we wound along a Kaffir path, round a higher ridge of the Didama, at Oribee and Rheebok, two Kaffirs were detected peeping over the tops of some detached rocks, which lay on the smooth green slope of the mountain side; we galloped in a few seconds across the short intervening space, but quick as we were they had disappeared in the most mysterious manner, and nothing was to be seen of them beyond a few foot-prints, which could not be traced, and three horses, of which we made prizes. While wondering whether they had sunk into the earth or vanished in air, several distant shots fired in quick succession, attracted our attention to a hill about a mile off, behind the fort, and on bringing our glasses to bear on the distant puffs of white smoke, we were astonished to perceive a large body of Kaffirs, mounted and on foot, engaged with our outlying picquet, and a few

Burghers. Away we went full "tripple" down the mountain side, at the risk of rolling head over heels to the bottom, dashed across the small stream at a flying leap, and spurred up the steep banks to the post, where we found the "alarm" signal flag flying, the gates locked, and the troops under arms. While Bruce brought on the infantry at the double, Hedley and I galloped up the hill and joined the Burghers, who, vastly outnumbered, were getting the worst of it, and retiring slowly before the enemy, who could not have been less than 300 at the very lowest computation, a third of them mounted. About 200 of their force pressed on the right of our little line of some two and twenty, while the remainder hovered round the left, and our only wonder at the moment was that they did not close upon us and annihilate the whole, which they might soon have done; but the Kaffir has a particular dislike to open plains and hand to hand fighting; this, and the bold determined bearing of the burghers, alone preserved us. Still it was impossible to hold our ground against such odds; we were being gradually driven back by their heavy fire, and our right flank was on the point of being turned by a fresh body of the enemy, who suddenly made their appearance from the krantz below, and rushed yelling onwards, till the party of infantry appeared over the rise, when they were seized with a panic, and took to flight, the whole of the force following their example, while we on horseback pursued them at full gallop, firing into them at close quarters, and driving them over the edge of the krantz down into the Koonap valley, killing and wounding many. As they scampered down the steep rocks at our feet, crossed the little basin, and clambered up the opposite rise, dodging among the mimosas, to get a

parting shot, we brought down many of them, counting above a dozen as they were carried off, dead or severely wounded, thrown across the backs of their horses or their comrades' shoulders. The chief, Macomo, who was distinctly visible on his white horse, high up on the mountain side, with a sort of staff round him, shouted constantly to his people, sending mounted Kaffirs to communicate his orders to those fighting; but when he saw his men flying he moved higher up, his white charger grew smaller and his voice more indistinct, until he was lost to sight. Our only casualties were a *dog* killed, and a horse wounded.

It afterwards turned out that while we were thus engaged, a smaller party of Kaffirs had taken advantage of the opportunity and driven off a span of trek oxen, grazing at some little distance down the valley. By the time we had returned and discovered the fact it was too late to think of following them.

We found occupation and amusement for some time in surveying and making maps of the country; improving our defences, removing detached rocks, filling up the small quarries, of which the enemy had taken such advantage during the siege, and building a flanking bastion, enfilading the two unprotected faces of the fort.

For some weeks we had constant thunder and lightning every evening, at times most terrific, at others distant, when the sheet lightning was magnificent, continuing till eclipsed by daybreak; and we sat every night on the *stoep* or raised verandah, in front of our quarters, watching the dazzling coruscations, which flashed and flickered each moment over the whole face of the dark sky, showing for an instant the lofty rugged grey peak of the Didama, the sentries on the wall, and every loop-hole—leaving all in utter darkness next. On one

such night a brighter flash discovered to one of the sentries the creeping black forms of two or three Kaffirs, making for the cattle kraal, a few yards only from the walls. Without firing, as at the best he could only have hit one, the sentinel quietly left the *banquette*, and reported it to the Sergeant of the guard. We were on the stoep, enjoying the deliciously cool midnight air after a blazing midsummer day, and instantly snatching our rifles from the pegs in the passage, joined the guard, and having quickly got about a score of fellows out of bed, posted two or three at each loop-hole, with their muskets, which had a most absurd effect as the lightning showed them standing round the walls in their shirts, with bare legs, in solemn silence. These arrangements having been made in less time than it takes to describe them, by a bright flash we fired a volley at three Kaffirs whom we saw at the kraal, when half a dozen more jumped up from different spots, and by the flickering blue light we saw them move across, and a volley blazed the whole length of the wall, doubtless to their great astonishment, as all had been still as death till that instant. From the quantity of blood spoor found next morning, many must have been severely wounded, if not killed.

Immediately below the fort was a glorious orchard, full of peach, nectarine, apricot, fig, plum, and pomegranate trees, the branches literally weighed down with the glowing load of ripe fruit, which almost as thickly strewed the grass beneath. In our constant patrols, at every Dutch Laager and ruined farm that we came upon for miles round, we found the same; and as the Boers at the former were most pressing, and the owners of the latter had abandoned them, we everywhere got as much fruit as we could conveniently eat, and the men were,

many of them, expiating their over indulgence by diarrhœa. The ripe fields of corn, sown in hopes of a peaceful harvest, waved uncut in many of the more distant valleys, but nearer to the post, the English Burghers and Dutch Boers mutually assisted in the harvest, working with their ammunition pouches on, and guns and arms within reach. To aid these half-ruined farmers, Bruce allowed about twenty of the soldiers to assist in reaping until all was secured, and our men worked most willingly all day in the heat of the sun, afterwards volunteering to help a poor old fellow who, unable to give his labour in return, was not helped by his neighbours; reaping and getting in his corn for him, as well as the produce of his little garden. Poor old Hayes had seen better and brighter times, had come out to the country with considerable means, and commenced farming with great energy on a large scale, but he had met with a series of reverses, and the total destruction of his property by the Kaffirs, at the commencement of the present war, which completed his ruin, had affected his mind. He lived at the foot of the walls in a small Kaffir hut; but in spite of his rags and poverty, he carefully treasured up a memento of by-gone prosperous days,—in a small box he still preserved his old scarlet hunting-coat. Too proud to the last to accept charity, the only way in which we could relieve him was by purchasing our vegetables from him at a liberal price. Shortly after this, his hut one night caught fire and was burned to the ground before any water could be got; he looked on in utter helplessness, as if overwhelmed by this crowning disaster. When the roaring blaze was over, and nothing remained but a heap of smouldering ashes, he was gone, and we all supposed had been taken by some of his

neighbours to their dwellings for the night. In the morning he was found in his little garden, lying on his face, cold and dead.

To a Peace Congress, or an Aborigines Protection Society, such a history would suggest itself as a special retributive Providence on the unjust aggressor; for to such philanthropists the real object of sympathy would of course be the gentle Kaffir and the oppressed Hottentot. Still, it is unhappily but one out of many a colonist's history, not the less sad because unknown.

Many of the Burghers, who from the scarcity of forage could not any longer feed their extra horses, brought them to us, offering the use of them for their keep; and Bruce happily conceived the idea of mounting as many of his men as he could thus procure horses for, and in a very short time had at his disposal a party of most serviceable mounted men, an invaluable assistance in our position in this open country.

The scenery from and around the post was of a character totally different from anything we had before seen in the country. In place of the endless bush and wooded kloofs and hills were smooth grassy plains, and mountains verdant to their broken summits. The Didama, in front of the fort, rose abruptly to a vast height, crowned by a sharp-pointed peak of most rugged and fantastic form; on the left stretched the flat-topped range of the Winterberg, on which, from our verandah, ostriches and hartebeest were occasionally seen with the glass; and bounding its western extremity rose the lofty and remarkable "Great Winterberg" (seen from all points, and equally visible at Botha's Hill, near Graham's Town), white with snow, which glistened in changing hues of rose in the setting sun.

In the valley at the foot of the nearer range were

some romantic kloofs in which were the ruins of several farm houses, which must have been fine situations in time of peace, warm and sheltered, luxuriant in vegetation, with orangeries, vineyards, and orchards of peaches, figs, and nectarines, shut in by green, sloping mountains, on which their cattle found excellent grazing, and well supplied with water from the rocky burns which bubbled down from the hills to the river in the lower valley. Now these lately prosperous and peaceful homes were burnt and blackened ruins, the four walls alone standing, the orchards overgrown, and rusted implements of husbandry strewed about, or left as they had been used on the day of flight or attack. One, in particular, at Hartebeest Fontein, deserves mention, belonging to a veteran tar, named Smith, who had served under Nelson, and been for many years a prisoner in France, where he had married a French girl, whose history was as eventful as his own, and who still lived with him at Post Retief, and shared his misfortunes at threescore and ten. The house bore ample marks of a desperate conflict and resistance, the walls being literally riddled with balls, some three or four hundred at the very least. The attack had lasted nearly thirty hours, the little band of fifteen or sixteen defenders, under the direction of the gallant old tar, then upwards of seventy, never leaving their posts at the loop-holes the whole time; only one of their number was killed, and so gallant and determined was their resistance, that the enemy at last abandoned the capture or destruction of the house as impracticable, and retired, carrying off, however, nearly 1000 sheep, and all the cattle, horses, and corn.

At the only other farm house near us, beside those mentioned in our night expedition, on a former page, the

windows were bricked up, leaving only a few narrow loop-holes; we found the proprietor a perfect specimen of a Dutch Boer, with the universal round jacket and broad-brimmed hat, sitting on the stoep in front of his solitary house smoking the usual green-stone pipe in solemn silence. Saluting us with a "Goen dag, Baas," as we rode up, he requested us to walk in; so dismounting, we entered a large comfortless room, with a stone floor, dimly lighted by the narrow loop-holes, and half filled with sacks of meal, and heaps of Indian corn. His vrouw, of course, was sitting, as usual, in a large chair, doing nothing; but he hospitably produced the Cape Smoke, which was made from figs, and as we drank our sopie, we patiently listened to a long account of his losses and grievances, having already acquired sufficient Dutch to converse fluently and understand all he said. After duly reciting all his troubles, which by the way had not affected his bodily frame much, he led us into the vineyard, where we found abundance of the most deliciously flavoured grapes, one sort, called the "honey-pot," especially so, and of immense size. The vineyards are of considerable extent, and the vines kept in standard bushes about the size of a large gooseberry tree.

The manufacture of Cape wines, Pontac, and Cape Smoke, is very considerable; the latter is a kind of whiskey, of a peculiar, and to many, disagreeable flavour. The best is obtained from grapes, though it is also made from figs and peaches. At all the farms were large vineyards; those in the vicinity of the post carefully tended, but a few miles distant, at the deserted houses, grew in wild untrimmed luxuriance, the ripe grapes dropping to the ground unheeded.

The vintage is an odd and picturesque scene; strings of Fingo women and girls, bear baskets of white and

purple grapes on their heads to the vats, where the men tread them out, singing monotonous ditties, while the big drops of perspiration fall plentifully from their shining faces, and mingle with the rich juice oozing from between their black toes.

One of our daily patrolling parties returned on the 19th with a boy and a couple Hottentot women prisoners. They had been robbing a neighbouring farm, and were caught returning to the Waterkloof with their skin-sacks filled with half-ripe fruit and vegetables. We got out of them on cross-examination, that on the day of their last attack, when we pursued them with twenty horsemen only, that they had five Kaffirs killed on the field, and nine others, Kaffirs and Totties, wounded, several of whom had since died. We also learned that the enemy were meditating an attack upon us that night or the night following. In consequence of this warning, the truth of which there was no reason to doubt, we brought the cattle within walls at sunset, doubled the sentries after tattoo, and kept a sharp look out. About midnight the silence was gradually broken by the cries of night-hawks and hyenas, and the barking of jackals answering each other far and near round the walls, which, however, were in reality the signals of savages apprising their confederates of our unexpected state of preparation. After a time, the sounds, so admirably imitated, grew less frequent, till they died away altogether. The morning showed us the soft ground marked on three sides of the fort with the prints of bare feet and veldt schoenen.

Every evening we continued to be visited by most appalling storms of thunder and lightning, but generally without rain. The continued peals rolled and echoed in a most imposing manner among the surround-

ing mountains. A Hottentot boy was killed one afternoon by the lightning.

Christmas Day had now come round, but instead of snow outside, and a roaring fire within, it was a roasting, broiling midsummer day, too hot to stir till after sunset, when we sat on the stoep unbonnetted and, in shirt sleeves, smoking far into the night, listening to the shrill chirp of the cicada and piping of the bullfrog, and talking of home and distant friends. We had neither wine nor grog to drink to their health and happiness, but pledged them cordially in coffee.

The Boers reporting a body of rebels to be living in one of the deserted farms of the Koonap valley, we set out with a party of mounted men to look them up; but, as far as the object of our ride was concerned, we had our trouble for nothing. We went round the foot of the hills by an extremely difficult path, along the face of a steep declivity overhanging the rocky bed of the river; up steep shingly ascents, and down steps or ledges of rock four or five feet deep, our horses jumping nimbly down after us, as none but Cape horses could. The farm was tenantless, and still as death, though there was plenty of spoor quite fresh; a small fire was still smouldering in one of the roofless chambers, and the ground under the fruit trees, which were perfectly stripped, was thickly trampled. The rebels had decamped, and were probably looking down on us from the mountain crags above.

We killed here an immense cobra capello, which rose erect a full yard above the long grass; spreading out his broad flat hood, he darted most savagely after a dog, and at a pace I should have thought impossible for anything in the form of a snake. Returning by the hill, we put up a fine leopard, or, as it is invariably called, a tiger,

and got several shots as it bounded down the mountain side, but, from the extraordinary way in which it doubled and leaped, we all missed it.

December 31st.—A convoy of waggons from Fort Beaufort, with supplies for our garrison, having come within a few miles of us, and stuck fast at the foot of a steep mountain road, called Botha's Rant, we went down at dawn with all the available force that could be spared, to their assistance. Each waggon had to be unloaded before it could be moved a single foot up the steep slippery path, and the men had every sack and barrel to carry up to the top of the hill.

Taking advantage of the additional force of this escort, we made a patrol into Kaal Hoek, where parties of rebel Hottentots were said to be living on the deserted farms. Bruce, with about two hundred infantry, took up a position a few miles from the Post, on a high hill commanding the country below; while I, with a party of about twenty-five mounted men, made a circuit through the valley from south to north, encountering some very bad and dangerous ground. Several of the party got severe falls in deep holes hidden by the long waving grass that reached to our saddle girths; one entirely disappeared, horse and all, in a collection of holes made by the ant-bears, and dislocated his wrist. In fact, it was always rather nervous work riding over these plains, which every body does at a canter; for, independently of the fall, if one happens to be in the rear of a party, the chances are ten to one against the accident being noticed; and then, as the horses usually take themselves off on such occasions, the unlucky rider is left on foot to the mercy of lurking Kaffirs, and probably with some bodily hurt, or a broken rifle. This may account for the

rate at which such parties invariably ride, as every one tries to keep his horse well up in front.

In our progress each deserted farm was surrounded and carefully examined; but, though the spoor was plentiful, it was nowhere less than two days old, and no one was to be found. The crops had been carried off half-ripe, and every fruit tree stripped bare. We came in our route on the remains of the Tottie woman accidentally killed by the Dutchmen; her skull and a few rags were all that was to be seen. After a circuit of about thirty miles, we returned to the Post, where we found one of our men, M'Linden, at his last breath; he died very soon after, having been ill only a few hours. Two days previously he had helped in building a wall of loose stones round the graves of our departed comrades buried outside the fort, and now, before our work was half completed, he had found his last resting-place in the same enclosure. He was a brave soldier, and we followed his body to the grave with real sorrow.

CHAPTER X.

BUSHMAN PAINTINGS—LOCUSTS—RETURN OF TRANS-KEI EXPEDITION.

JAN. 1ST. 1852.—A small party of the Boers, who had gone out in the morning to reconnoitre the Zuurberg heights, on which the smoke of a Kaffir fire had been visible all the previous day, returned in the afternoon with the intelligence that they had been sharply engaged with a much larger body of rebels, strongly posted among the crags. They had killed three of the enemy, but were obliged to abandon the attempt to dislodge them with so small a party. It was determined to attack them at early dawn the following morning. For this purpose the Field-Cornet was ordered to warn all the Burghers in his district to attend the rendezvous.

A couple of hours' riding brought us, by daybreak, to the foot of the mountain. The ascent was commenced, and soon became so steep that we had to dismount, and lead our horses up its rocky slope, till at last the large detached blocks became so frequent as to render that impossible, and leaving them on a small open plateau, with half a dozen men, we scrambled up the rest of the ascent on our hands and knees. Our trouble was in vain; for, after expecting at every step to be fired on, we finally stood in their deserted nest, which was

thickly strewn with remains of fruit, corn, and vegetables, stolen from the gardens of the settlers in the valley. It was a curious and well-concealed retreat, under an enormous overhanging cliff, scored with the Boers' bullets of the day before; a large mass of rock and one or two thick bushes in front, making it nearly a cavern. There was a regular cooking place of stones; also a small cave for sleeping in, the floor being covered with a bed of dry grass, evidently very lately used, and stained here and there with blood. The smooth faces of the rock in this cave as well as the other places were covered with Bushmen paintings, not unlike in appearance to some of those on the tombs of Egypt. For the most part they represented animals of the chase, koodoo, gemsbok, hartebeeste, &c., with a dog or two, a man, an assegai, or bow and arrows. The execution was very good, and the colours, chiefly red, blue, black and white, still retained their brightness, though the country has been deserted by its former inhabitants, the Bushmen, for many years. The Boers said there was another cave at some distance, and high up on the same range, but much larger, and completely covered with similar paintings; but it was unsafe to visit it without a stronger party, and we had too many patrols to allow our finding either men or time for the purpose.

The Dutchmen believe them to be a century or two old, and allege that the Bushmen worshipped them; but though it is quite possible, yet there is no evidence to show it; and they were probably nothing more than a record of hunting achievements.

We had heard many persons speak of these paintings as curiosities very rarely found, and that only in remote districts, and were therefore as much surprised as pleased at finding them so near, though certainly in

a sufficiently out-of-the-way place. I made a hasty sketch of some of them on the outside wrapper of a packet of cartridge. The whole locality was most beautiful; enormous detached masses of rock, scattered around, and stupendous cliffs of a bright yellow and orange colour, their crevices studded with bushes and scarlet and pink ivy-leaved geranium.

At mid-day on the 9th, a large body of the enemy, who had concealed themselves by night in the dry bed of a mountain torrent, suddenly rushed from their ambush, and having wounded a young man at work near the house, before he could seize his gun, instantly swept off the whole of Mynheer Rautenbach's horses, cattle, and sheep. The sound of shots, and especially the well-known "roer" of the old Dutchman, a huge weapon carrying a 4 oz. ball, gave us the alarm at the Post in a moment, though four miles off, for no idle firing was permitted. The alarm was taken up by the Fingoes on the look-out hills; the wall pieces at the Fort were fired as a signal to the Burghers, and in less than ten minutes a mounted party was rattling out of the barrack square, and galloping down the road amid clouds of dust. As we passed the two Laagers, some were loading their roers, others buckling on their powder-horns and pouches; while the "jungvrouws" were saddling the fresh-caught horses, for their fathers, husbands, and brothers; they soon overtook us by short cuts, and as we swept past old Rautenbach's barricaded house, our party was augmented to seventy or eighty men. At a turn in the lovely valley, which opened before us about a mile beyond the farm, we could see the enemy; the green sloping summit of the Zuurberg on our right, and half a mile further up the poort the cattle driven along by a party of mounted Kaffirs. With

a shout of exultation we again dashed forward, rattling along the road in an exciting chase; the long manes and tails of the Dutchmen's horses streaming in the wind, the bullets whistling over our heads from the Kaffir-crowned heights, and the enemy before us straining every nerve to reach a narrow gorge, called Tiger's Kloof, the entrance to which was guarded by parties of their comrades posted among the fort-like rocks on either side. The ground presently became so full of hidden holes that in three or four minutes, as many of our party were down.

In the midst of our career, we came to a sudden check at a deep drift, immediately under fire from a "koppie"* held by the rebels, who took deliberate aim as we leaped from rock to rock, leading our horses through the bed of the stream; but no-one was hit, though three of the horses were wounded. Without waiting to form a party, each one as he mounted pushed on up the Kloof after the cattle, the enemy still keeping up a smart fire. As soon as all had fairly entered the gorge, the Kaffirs on the heights hurried down to take possession of its entrance, but a well directed fire from the party dropped behind to hold the opposing rocks, frustrated the attempt.

The sheep had fallen into our hands at the foot of the mountain, and now the fugitives, closely pressed, abandoned their spoil altogether, and many leaping from their horses, in the hope of escaping on foot among the rocks, were killed at close quarters, fighting bravely to the last.

The stolen horses escaped us, having reached the edge of the Zuurburg bush, but the whole of the oxen and

* A little round hill surmounted by rocks.

sheep were re-captured, and six of the enemy's horses and some arms taken. Our own steeds were so completely done up that many came to a stand still, compelling their riders to return a great part of the way on foot. Mynheer Rautenbach was very glad to get so much back again; but he deeply grieved over his nephew, the young man who had been wounded by a charge of "loopers," or slugs, which lodged in the shoulder joint. His sufferings were very severe, and our surgeon pronounced his recovery doubtful.

We were at this time visited by flights of locusts, more numerous than had been known for years. They came in such myriads as literally to darken the air, passing over for hours together in one continued cloud, stretching as far as the eye could see, and frequently shutting out from view objects at the distance of a few hundred yards. The sound of their flight was like the wind; the plain was completely covered with them for miles; and we moved through them with eyes half closed and heads bent down as they were borne along on the breeze. One while they looked like falling snow, and the ground was whitened over as the sun caught their wings in a particular light; another, they appeared sweeping across the sky like a dark smoke. Everything green disappeared in a few days, the young crops were gone, and the pasturage vanished. But what was not less extraordinary, every living thing in turn fed on them. Not only did the horses and cattle greedily devour the destroyers, and the dogs and poultry run after them with open mouths, doubling and turning and jumping off their feet in absurd attempts to catch them in the air, but the Dutch and Hottentot servants fried them in fat and eat them in quantities; the tribes up the country live on them during the season, and lay by

a stock of locust meal* for the winter, drying them in the sun and pounding them between stones; but this is less surprising among people who kipper snakes, and store up bags of dried ants for family use. We tried fresh locusts, both cooked and uncooked, but found them, to say the least, very indifferent eating.

Our only communication with the world was by means of our faithful Fingoes, who, assuming the Kaffir characteristics, made their way down to Beaufort by secret bush paths under cover of night. On these occasions, which, except on emergencies, were only once a month, the "post party," equipped for the road, came at nightfall to our little whitewashed mess room for the mail; their tall, dusky figures filling the doorway as they stood folded in their blankets; the old chief, Umkye, a fine fellow of six feet three, minus an eye, receiving the mail-bag with many injunctions about its safety. Lingering at the door, the party invariably cast wistful glances at the bottles on the table, when, perhaps, some one, egged on by the rest, would venture to say, with assumed gravity, "Plenty cold night, Baas," and then (as all Kaffirs and Fingoes do) put the end of his thumb between his teeth, in a half deprecatory half-frightened manner. But finding the hint not taken, would return to the attack,—"Kleine sopie goot für de brieffe" (A little drop will be good for the mail). The thumb in the mouth again; "Banyou, Amakosa in de padt, Baas; ein bidtge sopie make big heart" (plenty of Kaffirs in the way, sir; a little dram, &c. &c.) The glistening eyes and animated expression that accompanied the pouring

* Madden, in his Travels, states that the use of pounded locusts as flour, is common among the Arabs.

out the coveted dram, and the gusto with which the last drop was drained, would have made a fine subject for the pencil.

Their dislike to this duty was extreme; and unless old Umkye, whose authority none of them dared dispute, were of the party, ten to one the big hearts would get so small on approaching the bush, that they were pretty sure to turn back. On one occasion we found out that the rascals had only gone a few hundred yards from the Fort, and sitting down under the shelter of some rocks, indulged themselves with a pipe for a couple of hours, declaring, when they returned, that they had fallen in with Kaffirs, and barely escaped with their lives. Their escape, however, not being viewed in the light they had anticipated, they were consigned to the guard-room for the remainder of the night, and in the morning, their foot-prints having been tracked, they were told, very much to their surprise (never suspecting white men of tracing spoor), where they had been and what they had done, and were also given to understand that they would be kept prisoners till nightfall, when, though they had shown themselves rascals, they would graciously be permitted the undeserved privilege of proving they were not "amafazi" (women), and would be allowed to set off again. But they had really several narrow escapes, having been once or twice attacked and dispersed by war parties, and owing their escape solely to the darkness of the night and their intimate knowledge of the bush paths. Their journey this month with our letters for the English mail was the last for poor old Umkye; the post-party was waylaid by the Kaffirs, and he was killed; the rest, dispersed in all directions, escaping by superior activity, one to the Blinkwater, two

to the Rifle Brigade camp, and one to Post Retief, bringing the news to the chief's wife. We were startled from sleep, about six in the morning, by the most unearthly yells and howls in the barrack-square, all the women joining the widow and her family in their accustomed wild lament. We were deeply grieved at his loss. His amusing and eccentric habits, his respectful manner, and regular attendance at our Church service, had made him a great favourite. Though he could not understand a word of English, he never missed coming to service on Sunday; but could never be induced to venture further than the door, where he sat cross-legged on the floor, stood in a reverential posture, or knelt prostrate with his face on the ground. At his own kraal he nightly collected his household, and prayed and sung a hymn with them. His loss was longer regretted at the Post, if not more deeply felt, than by his wife; for when we gave her a cow and calf, her grief seemed to be forgotten in the calculation of their probable value.

Rautenbach's nephew continuing in a very precarious state, we rode over constantly to see him, taking any little thing in the way of delicacies that we had, though poor was the best. One day we found them thrashing out maize in the house; five or six Dutch Boers with pipes in their mouths, and one or two odoriferous Fingoes sat cross-legged on the stone floor round a heap of "cobs," hammering away at it with keeries—the grains flew all about the room, hitting the clock, the windows, and the glasses, and striking one in the face in a most unpleasant manner. All the time we were talking to the Baas we were screwing up our eyes and ducking our heads, though the old man did not seem to mind it in

the least, never winking even, unless actually hit in the eye. The noise could not have been very soothing to the wounded youth, who lay in a dark room adjoining, the window, like all the rest, being bricked up outside for defence. He was in great pain, and evidently sinking fast; two days afterwards death released him from his sufferings, adding another victim to the long list of murdered settlers.

The long dry grass having about this time been accidentally or purposely set on fire by the enemy, the plains around were burning for several days, nothing arresting the course of the flames except a road or a stream. During the day-time a dense cloud of smoke hung over the country; at night the sky was lurid from the blaze, and the effect was magnificent, whole mountain sides and countless thousands of acres presenting one sheet of flame. Nothing could be more dreary and desolate than the endless tracts of blackened country which the conflagration left behind.

January 11.—The Trans-Kei expedition returned at this date to King William's Town, after six weeks in the field without tents, and exposed to deluges of rain among high grass. The refractory and treacherous chief, Kreli, had been severely punished; many of his men killed; 30,000 head of cattle taken; 14,000 goats, and a great number of horses; besides 7000 Fingo slaves liberated, and brought away with their cattle, amounting to 30,000 more, all which had, of course, virtually belonged to Kreli. This crushing blow on the paramount chief of all the Kaffirs, produced a most salutary effect through the whole of Kaffirland.

On the last day of the month, a commando of mounted Boers having joined us from Tarka the previous

day, we started at 2 A.M., with all our available horsemen, the party altogether about 100 strong, to patrol the Koonap district. It was a fine moonlight morning, and as, for the first few miles, silence was not necessary, we trotted along with a cheerful sound of horses' hoofs, clanking stirrups, and jingling arms, mingled with a Babel of tongues, English and Dutch, Gaelic, broad Scotch, and Fingo. On reaching Kaal Hoek, and finding that we were a little too early, we off-saddled, and in silence, each one at his horse's head, waited for daylight, in front of a belt of wood on the hill-side, which echoed with the cries of wild pintados, as the sky brightened with the coming dawn.

We rode round by Bushneck, and from the heights could see a few stray Kaffirs moving across the Waterkloof valley far below. Thence we proceeded, over hill and plain, under a burning sun, through the Koonap district, passing many deserted farms, their orchards bent down with the weight of unheeded fruit, and threading our way by deep bush and eddying river, where, excepting the chattering of the flocks of brilliant scarlet bunting,* which built their pensile nests, and flitted among the tall papyrus, the silence and solitude were oppressive. Now and then we came on the print of naked feet and the remnants of half eaten prickly-pears, but the spoor was old, and consequently useless. On many of the mimosas, we observed large clusters of a very beautiful parasitical plant, a *Loranthus*, with dark glossy leaves, and orange coloured flowers.

After having descended the side of a steep rocky mountain where it was necessary to alight and lead our

* Euplectes Oryx.

horses, I was in the act of remounting, when my horse suddenly started off at a gallop, and taking the bit in his mouth, left me at his mercy, with one foot in the stirrup and a loaded rifle in my hand. The saddle being loose, turned round, and after a short but mad career, down we came on the stones with a crash that made the sparks fly from my eyes; the next moment I found myself in the centre of a ring of kind-hearted Boers, eager to render me assistance; one trying to mend my favourite rifle, which was smashed to pieces, others offering water, and two or three feeling me all over, to ascertain whether any bones were broken. Happily I had not sustained any serious injury, though sufficiently severe to render me very unequal to the exertion of riding thirty miles further in the sun, over a country becoming at every step more rugged and difficult. Sometimes we had to cross roaring drifts of the Koonap with slippery shelving rocks, that frequently launched horse and rider into deep eddying pools; or, bent double on the saddle-bows, pushed our way through thorny thickets of *vacht um bidtge,** prickly-pear, and mimosa, occasionally creeping round some precipitous scaur, by a narrow and crumbling track, where a false step of our nimble and active steeds would have hurled us into the river beneath.

The sun was so hot, that my leg and thigh, from which the trews had been completely torn, became blistered by its burning rays, and continued very painful for many days after.

At Viljoens farm, we surprised a small party of Kaffirs robbing and destroying. A brisk scrimmage took place; three or four of them were killed, and some women captured, whom we liberated after getting all

* "Wait-a-bit" thorn.

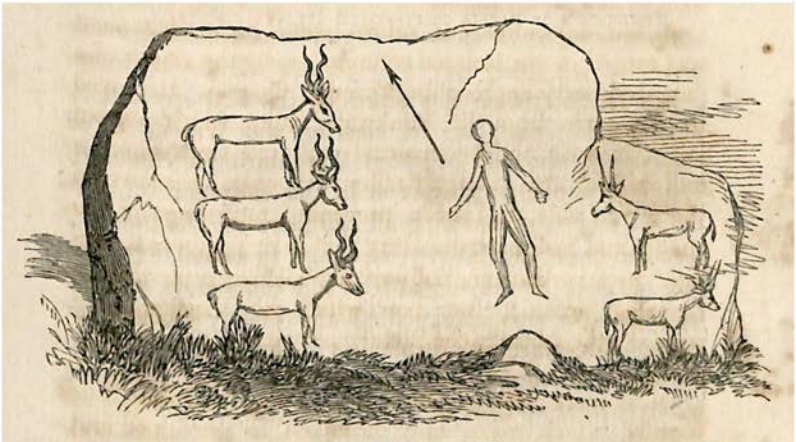
the information we could out of them, which was, as usual, very little.

Never had the sight of the little fort been more welcome than on that sultry evening, after sixteen hours patrolling over more than fifty miles of broken country, and the last thirty miles of it in great pain. I did not leave my bed for many days; the heat of the weather, and the peculiar tendency of the atmosphere to aggravate every wound, however trivial, rendering mine both tedious and troublesome.

A few days after our return, some little excitement was caused in our isolated community, by the report of a mounted party approaching through the glen. It proved to be a patrol from the Blinkwater camp, which, having fallen in with the enemy, and captured twelve horses, and killing also sundry Kaffirs without any casualty on their own side, had been prevented returning by the timely and fortunate discovery that their pass was "forelaid" by a very strong body of the enemy; consequently they had made for our post, which they reached safely with all their booty, completely outwitting the cunning savages.

Once more able to mount my horse, I rejoined our patrols, which were fully occupied in pursuing and waylaying the enemy, who, in small detached parties, made their appearance first on one side, then on another, in vain attempts to seize the government cattle; upwards of a thousand head being generally kept here in reserve. On clear bright days we were tolerably secure, as we could then discover with the glass, the solitary blanketted spy, perched on some lofty crag of the Didama or Little Winterberg; but when their summits were hidden, and the clouds rolled half way down their sides, and hung there motionless, we were all on the

qui vive, for the crafty Kaffirs, creeping down under the vapoury cover, would exchange shots with the cattle guard, or herdsmen, even though they did not venture to make a dash for the cattle.



ANCIENT BUSHMAN PAINTINGS.

CHAPTER XI.

DESTRUCTION OF KAFFIR CROPS—FIFTH ATTACK ON WATERKLOOF.

SIR H. SMITH, on the return of the Kei expedition, having laid his plans for clearing the Waterkloof of the enemy, who had collected there during his absence, issued a public proclamation in the early part of this month, February, ordering all Burghers on the frontier, between twenty and fifty years of age, to assemble by the 9th of next month, under the old commando system, to aid the troops in expelling the enemy from their stronghold; warning all colonists at the same time that, failing compliance, themselves must bear the responsibility of their apathy.

Notwithstanding this incentive, which one would hardly have supposed necessary for men the safety and preservation of whose families and private property were at issue, they made, generally speaking, a most mean and pitiful response to the command. One or two districts, that of Albert in particular, being alone exceptions to what Sir H. Smith termed their "melancholy shuffling."

At the latter end of the month, the troops were despatched, armed with scythes, old swords, and reaping hooks, to destroy the half ripe crops of the Kaffirs in the

Amatola country, from whence they obtained the supplies that enabled them to carry on the harassing war. Immense quantities were destroyed at the sources of the Upper Keiskamma, in the "Wolf's Den" (Sandilli's *home-farm*), in the Gulu valley, the Amatola basin, the Zanooka valley, and the Chumie, including the 'gardens' of the chief Soga, the treacherous murderer of the military villagers in that district.

Though none of the Kat River missionaries openly expressed any feelings of compassion or indignation at this wholesale demolition of the poor Kaffir's crops, their mouth-piece, Mr. Renton, took the pains to concoct a very touching tale about some potatoes, affirmed by him to have been stolen from one of their own gardens by our inhuman and wicked Highlanders. This story, circumstantially related on a visit to Scotland, greatly affected his audience at an assembled synod, to our great amusement, at the expense of their wasted sympathies, when we afterwards heard of it. The fact was, that the garden being in the enemy's country, of course the crops in it had to share the same fate as the rest; but, just as its destruction commenced, special counter-orders were issued to spare it, and payment was offered by the soldiers for the little which had been taken; the money being refused, was thrown on the ground.

B——, who had been absent for a couple of days, returned in the evening of the 5th March, with a glorious budget of news and English letters. We learned from him that a sharp skirmish had taken place under General Somerset, three days before, in the Waterkloof, in which they had killed about thirty Kaffirs, and destroyed two villages, capturing eighty head of cattle and thirty horses. Lieut.-Col. Yarborough, 91st Regi-

ment, and Captain Bramley, Cape Mounted Rifles, had been severely wounded, Ensign Herbert slightly; and eight men of the 74th Highlanders killed and wounded, besides several of the 91st and Cape Corps.

The Rifle Brigade had arrived from England, and fresh drafts for the different regiments were reported to have reached the Cape in the "Birkenhead," including sixty-six rank and file for us, with our new Lieut.-Col. Seton, and Ensign Russell. Only two days after hearing of the safe arrival of our draft and other reinforcements in the "Birkenhead," we were startled by the sad and astounding intelligence of her total wreck off Simon's Bay, and the loss of nearly all on board in a calm sea, and within sight of the shore. From the moment she struck on a hidden rock till she broke up and sank, barely twenty minutes elapsed; during which, however, by the noble and generous exertions of the troops, the whole of the women and children were got off, when she parted and went down, all the brave fellows steadily performing their duty to the last. According to the report of Captain Wright, 91st Regiment, one of the few survivors—"there is no doubt most of the men in the lower troop deck were drowned in their hammocks. The rest appeared on deck, when Lieut.-Col. Seton called the officers about him and impressed upon them the necessity of preserving order and silence among the men. Every one did as he was directed, and there was not a murmur or a cry amongst them until the vessel made her final plunge. All received their orders and had them carried out as if the men were embarking instead of going to the bottom. There was only this difference, that never was an embarkation conducted with so little noise or confusion."

Out of 14 officers and 458 men on board, no less than

9 officers and 349 men were lost, besides the crew; 5 officers and 109 men alone escaped to shore by swimming, or clinging to the drift-wood. Not a single woman or child was lost, all being carefully shipped into the cutter-boat and safely landed. Of the 74th Highlanders, Colonel Seton, Ensign A. C. Russell, and 48 men, nearly the whole draft, unhappily perished,—18 only escaping to shore. Colonel Seton had only heard at the Madeiras of the death of his gallant senior, Colonel Fordyce, and his own appointment to the command of the regiment. He was a man of great and varied attainments, being especially distinguished as a linguist and mathematician.

Russell, though he had joined the depôt at Kinsale after the regiment had left for the Cape, was well known to us by report for his gentlemanly, amiable, bearing, and high principle. His untimely end was keenly felt by those of his brother officers who had personally known him, and lamented by all. In those last awful moments he was noticed carrying out the commands of his Colonel with noble courage and undisturbed composure.

Our letters from home, doubly welcome in our mountain solitude, kept us up till a late hour. The *Illustrated News* and *Punch* never before seen in those regions, were wisely economised for another day, as we could not afford to exhaust a month's amusement at one sitting.

March 8th.—About midnight, as we sat on the "stoep" of the officers' quarters, smoking in silence, and enjoying the cool, soft night air, watching the while the bright stars of the "Southern Cross," that sparkled above the jagged peak of the Didama, a distant bugle sounded the "cease firing." Our bugler being summoned by the sentry on the wall, the "advance" rang out clear on the

night air, softly echoing from rock to rock. In a few minutes the clattering of horses was heard rapidly approaching; and the challenge of the sentinel, from whose platform we looked on a mass of horsemen, was answered by the familiar voice of the gallant Tylden. He had come with a large force of mounted men to be in readiness to move with us in the combined attack on the Waterkloof, to which we were anxiously looking forward.

The second Division, recruited and re-equipped after the Kei expedition, marched from King William's Town to Fort Beaufort, to join General Somerset's division at the Blinkwater, and take their share in the assault. The order of attack (made known only to the officers in command) was to be as follows:—The right column, under Lieut.-Col. Eyre, consisting of four guns; a Rocket troop; the 43rd Light Infantry; the 73rd Regiment and two companies of the 74th Highlanders; with detachments of Native Levies; was to move from the Blinkwater Post, dislodge the enemy from Fullers Hoek, and attack Macomo's "Den" on the ridge.

The centre column, under Lieut.-Col. Michell, consisting of two guns; the 6th Regiment; four companies of the 45th; the 60th Rifles; and Native Levies; was to ascend the Kromme Heights from Blakeway's farm, by the Wolfsback Ridge, and attack the bushy kloof connecting Fullers Hoek with the Waterkloof.

The left column, under Lieut.-Col. Napier, two guns, four companies of the 74th Highlanders, the 91st Regiment, 150 Cape Mounted Rifles, 200 Fingo Levies, and all Burghers that might show themselves, was to move up the valley of the Waterkloof from Bushneck to its head, and thence ascend to meet the attack of the centre column, leaving a mounted body to cut off any dis-

lodged parties endeavouring to escape from one Kloof to another.

The 12th Lancers and a detachment of Cape Corps under Lieut-Col. Pole, were to be stationed at the ruined settlement of Hertzog, to cut off the retreat of the enemy to the Amatolas; and our party from Post Retief, about 160 mounted men, was to patrol on the Waterkloof heights to intercept the retreat of the enemy or their cattle in that direction. All these bodies were to be at their appointed positions on the 9th, ready to move at daylight next morning.

The day following the arrival of Tylden's party was necessarily a day of rest; for they had ridden thirty miles across the mountains, and many of the horses were in a very indifferent condition, not having recovered from the hardships of the late expedition into Kreli's country.

Early on the morning of the 10th, the whole party, having mustered in the barrack square, marched out, winding along the little glen, a body of rough looking but gallant and business-like fellows. Just as they reached the heights, the first boom of artillery was heard in the direction of Fullers Hoek, announcing the commencement of operations, and soon a brisk cannonade and rattle of musketry, was followed by more distant reports from the south and west, as the two other columns advanced on their respective routes. For some time our horsemen had little or nothing to do, as the enemy were naturally drawn towards the points, so unexpectedly attacked, but as they were forced back by the advance of Colonel Napier's column in the Kloof below, they drove their cattle up its steep forest clothed sides to the summit, where their intended escape into the opposite valley of the Kat River was frustrated by the unlooked for presence of the Post Retief detachment, which, ex-

changing rapid shots with the astonished Kaffirs, and following them into the bush to which they again quickly retreated, brought out many of their cattle, and gave them such a rough handling, that those who escaped it preferred remaining under cover and taking their chance from the advancing skirmishers below. After this, distant shots only could be obtained; yet having in the party several of the best marksmen in the country, not a Kaffir within half a mile showed himself a second time. No one who has not seen it could believe, either the accuracy with which many of the officers and Burghers to whom I refer, and could name, would hit an object at that distance with a rifle ball, or the extraordinary practice they make at much greater ranges.

Rifle shooting and rifles, our main arm in this guerilla warfare, were of course the subjects of constant discussion; target shooting was incessantly going on while in camp, and a rifle never out of our hands on the march, so that every tyro became in a wonderfully short time a fair marksman, and many, first-rate shots. The distribution of Minié rifles to the troops excited great emulation amongst the men also, which was increased by our giving shilling and half-crown prizes for inner circle and bull's-eye hits. At first, six of the new weapons were distributed in each company to the best shots, but the number was afterwards increased, as fresh supplies were sent out to us.

Scarcely a mail-steamer arrived from England without bringing some new improvement in fire-arms; smooth bore, two groove, four groove, and poly groove, half and quarter twist, rifle barrels; conical balls, plain and winged, sharp pointed and rounded, with wooden plugs or iron cups, concave and convex bases, &c., were each in turn tested, discussed, advocated, or rejected, affording a

never-failing topic of interest and conversation; but after all our experimental trials, there were nearly as many advocates of each improvement as there were varieties; the only points in which all agreed was, the decided superiority of the conical ball generally, and the admirable efficiency of the weapons so opportunely sent out for the troops.

The ordinary range for target practice was from 500 to 800 yards, at which distance the men generally put in two out of five rounds, the target being a white board six feet high by three broad. At 900 yards, or more than half a mile, one shot out of seven hit on an average, the rest ploughing up the dust so near, that it must have been anxious work for the target; even at three quarters of a mile, we were able to disperse small "clumpjies" of Kaffirs and cattle.

For four succeeding days, the Columns completely traversed every part of the Blinkwater, Fullers Hoek, Kromme, and Waterkloof. Our party was during the same time patrolling on the heights of these mountain ranges, preventing escape on the part of the enemy; cutting off such small parties as, more daring than the rest, attempted it; capturing horses and cattle, and skirmishing along the whole eastern ridge of the Waterkloof. The operations of the different columns had been most successful; one after another, the whole of the enemy's positions had been taken. On the first day, Lieut.-Col. Eyre's column, in eight parties of attack, ascended the steep and difficult paths of Fullers Hoek, and driving the enemy before them, in spite of a stout resistance, crowned the summits and destroyed their villages. On the second day he attacked "the Den," celebrated as the especial and private stronghold of Macomo, said indeed to be impregnable. The entrance,

a sort of natural stair in the rocks, had been discovered to us by a female prisoner. All the guns were brought to bear against it, and their fire told fearfully among the defenders. The place was carried, and in its recesses were found 130 women; among them, Macomo's *Great Wife*, a royal Tambookie of considerable importance in the tribe, together with several others standing in the same relation to him, though less distinguished. Among the rocks were quantities of apparel and provisions, with powder, lead, and bullet-moulds. The whole of the women were taken off prisoners, and the *Den* completely destroyed. Twenty dead bodies of Kaffirs were found, killed by the guns, independently of those that fell in the assault. We had the misfortune to lose a gallant young officer, Lieutenant the Hon. H. Wrottesley, 43rd Light Infantry, who was mortally wounded, and died afterwards in camp; three men of the 73rd were also killed, and some wounded.

During this attack, Colonels Napier and Michel ascended respectively the Kromme and Waterkloof heights, dragging their guns by dint of incredible exertions up almost impracticable steeps (the former being sharply engaged), drove the rebels from their positions, and then, acting in concert, destroyed all their kraals.

On the 15th, Colonel Napier captured 130 head of cattle and many horses, taking fifty women and children prisoners, and killing several of the rebels. The 60th Rifles, under Captain the Hon. A. Hope, attacking the Iron Mountain, on which the enemy took his final stand, forced them from the position with fixed swords, and they were pursued and driven over the Krantzes, with great loss, by the remainder of the 60th, under

Major Bedford, 560 head of cattle and 75 horses falling into their hands.

After this the enemy fled through the country in all directions, making chiefly for the Amatolas.

Simultaneously with the above combined movements, an attack, with like success, had been made by Lieut.-Col. Perceval, on the Chief, Stock, in the Fish River bush.

While Captain Tylden and his Burghers were still with us at Post Retief, the friendly Kaffir Chief, Kama, a faithful and valued ally of the government, arrived with a retinue on his way back to his village, after an interview with the Governor-General, and encamped outside the walls for the night. He accepted with great politeness our invitation to mess. He had been to request His Excellency not to make peace with the Gaikas or Kreli, until the whole of the former had crossed the Kei. In the progress of the war he took the most lively interest; and though his *Great Wife* was sister to Macomo, expressed his anxiety to see him vanquished and driven from his stronghold. He had left his own territory previous to the commencement of the last war, disapproving of the intentions of his countrymen, and feeling his consequent insecurity among them. His lands he placed in the hands of the British Representative to hold in trust for him, and with about 200 families of his tribe, removed into the colony, residing at this time at Kamastone, a location assigned him near Whittlesea. He had done good and faithful service through the whole of the present war, taking the field with his sons and all his fighting men, of whom many had been killed by the enemy. He appeared at dinner in a black coat and a *clean shirt;* behaved in a quiet, self-possessed manner; took wine, and used his knife and fork as if he had been familiar with such things all his life. His

appetite, or politeness, was wonderful, taking everything that was offered him; and if he was not ill after it, his digestion was not less so.

Sir H. Smith marched from the Blinkwater camp on the 17th with the Second Division under his own immediate command, to attack a body of Rebels and Kaffirs who, under the Chief Tyali, had taken up a position in the Chumie, General Somerset at the same time following up the flying enemy towards the N.E. frontier. As a natural consequence of the breaking up of their main body, the country was filled with scattered parties, robbing and attacking the settlers everywhere, so that our duties in patrolling became more than ever arduous; hardly a day passed in which we did not go out, and few patrols returned without having had some affair on hand.

A six-pounder gun, with its complement of artillerymen, was despatched for our garrison from Beaufort, to shell the impervious ravines in which we could occasionally see the Kaffirs from the table-land above. At two in the morning we went with a party of seventy men to the top of the Blinkwater Pass to meet it. While waiting there, we could distinctly hear the Kaffirs and their dogs in the forest below. Presently our ears recognised the echoing report of the waggon whip, which gradually neared, and soon the red coats of the 91st came in sight on an open piece of road at our feet. As we returned to the Post with our new acquisition, we put up whole coveys of partridges, though our rifle and pistol practice at them did not add much to the larder.

Next day we went out to shell a cluster of deserted wood-cutters' huts, down in the valley below Bothas bush, which had, the day before, been reported as inhabited by the Kaffirs. Three or four shells burst right

over them. One or two Kaffirs were seen, by the glass, making their escape; and two others catching a couple of horses, that looked at the distance, no bigger than dogs. In less than five minutes after the report of the gun, the thick smoke of a Kaffir signal (one can hardly call it a fire) ascended in the still air at a distance of about eight miles, and very soon after three or four others rose in succession on the more distant ranges.

On the 7th April, Lieut.-General Cathcart, the newly-appointed Governor-General assumed the command; and Sir Harry Smith, our gallant and highly-esteemed General, published his farewell, General Order:—

"*Head Quarters, King William's Town,*
"*April 7*, 1852.

"His Excellency Lieut.-General the Hon. George Cathcart having been appointed by the Queen to relieve me, I this day relinquish the command.

"Brother Officers and Soldiers. Nothing is more painful than to bid farewell to old and faithful friends. I have served my Queen and country many years, and attached as I have ever been to gallant soldiers, none were ever more endeared to me than those serving in the arduous campaign of 1851-52 in South Africa. The unceasing labours, the night marches, the burning sun, the torrents of rain have been encountered with a cheerfulness as conspicuous as the intrepidity with which you have met the enemy in so many enterprising fights and skirmishes in his own mountain fastnesses and strongholds, and from which you have ever driven him victoriously.

"I leave you, my comrades, in the fervent hope of laying before your Queen, your country, and his Grace the Duke of Wellington, these services as they deserve, which reflect so much honour upon you.

"Farewell, my comrades; your honour and interests will be ever far more dear to me than my own.

(Signed) "H. G. SMITH.

"A. T. Cloete, Quartermaster-General."

On the same day, and just before the relinquishment of his command, news arrived of the successful exertions of the columns patrolling in the Amatolas; Major-Gen. Somerset's having killed upwards of 100 of the enemy, and captured 3120 head of cattle, 70 horses and 1500 goats. The escort bringing the report of this patrol, fell in with a party of the enemy, whom they gallantly attacked, and took from them 198 head of cattle and 5 horses. At the same time Lieut.-Col. Eyre's column acting in combination with that of the General, captured 800 head of cattle and 15 horses, from a formidable position in the Amatolas; though with the loss of one officer, Captain Gore, 43rd Light Infantry, killed at the head of his company, and six men wounded.

For the next week or ten days we were out almost daily patrolling the mountains, following up marauding parties, and shelling the kloofs. On one of these duties we had ridden to the top of the northern spur of the little Winterberg to reconnoitre the Koonap valley; sweeping the vast bush-dotted plain with the telescope, we spied about twenty Kaffirs, at a distance of some four miles or more, making across from Viljoens towards the Waterkloof. We determined to cut them off, and at once led our horses down the mountain side into the bushy kloof, by a rocky and difficult descent; and scrambling out on the opposite side through the thorny bushes, galloped across the plain for some miles, till we struck on their spoor, which we

followed for a mile further, where, leaving the road, it became lost in the grass. After having proceeded as far as we thought it possible for them to have got in the interim, and seeing nothing of them on the immense undulating plain, we concluded they must have observed us, and taken refuge in some of the isolated patches of bush scattered over it like islands. As the sun was already low, we were just about turning our steps homeward, when we suddenly espied them, about a mile off on our right, leisurely ascending out of a grassy hollow. Separating into two little parties to surround them, Bruce leading one, I the other, we went full speed down hill over the rough broken ground at a break-neck pace, keeping an eye on them to note if they observed us. But though neither stone nor bush intervened they never perceived us till within 500 yards, when throwing away their skin sacks, off they started like the wind, making for a distant narrow belt of wood, under cover of which and the rapidly approaching darkness, they hoped to give us the slip. The pace was killing, and we had yet nearly half a mile to make up before we could intercept them. The chase became most exciting, as we took flying, yawning sluits five or six feet deep. At last two of them gave in, but perceiving them to be women, we held on in pursuit of the others, firing an occasional shot. Just as they gained the cover we dashed up, and springing from our panting horses, followed them into the tangled underwood, leaving a few outside the belt to watch if they broke cover. But the gloom of the trees, increased by the rapidly approaching night, made our progress slow and difficult, and though we worked completely through the bush they escaped us.

We were now fourteen miles from the Fort, and taking

with us our two prisoners, returned at a foot's pace; one of them, a Totty, was the wife of Speelman Kievet, one of the most notorious of the Rebel leaders. The other was a Madagascar slave, hideously ugly. On our way we picked up the skin sacks that had been thrown away; they were full of half-ripe fruit and meelies. It was 9 o'clock when we reached the Post, where our long absence, for we had been out since noon, had caused much uneasiness, as mounted Kaffirs had been seen through the telescope, hovering about us on the higher ridges of the mountain we had ascended. When we made our appearance, two parties, one of mounted Boers, and the other of infantry, were on the point of setting off to search for us, or our remains; the latter being supposed the more probable issue, as it was fully thought that we must have been surrounded and massacred; judging, however, in case we should return alive, that we should be uncommonly hungry, our friends had judiciously reserved dinner, or, more correctly, supper for us, which we lost no time in sitting down to.

The night following, at 12 o'clock, we marched out of the Fort with the gun and artillerymen, ninety rank and file, and a guide, for Engelbrecht's Kloof, a difficult wooded retreat, in which the enemy were said to be lurking. On the way we had some sport with a couple of porcupines, the dogs in front barking violently at some object which they evidently had at bay; I rode forward with the guide, but it was so dark that we had some difficulty in finding their whereabouts. One of them kept our dogs at a respectful distance, rattling his tail on the ground and shaking his quills; but he was soon despatched and hanging on the gun-limber. We preserved his tail, which was quite a curiosity, a bunch of short truncated hollow quills,

stuck on a lump of flesh. No animal of its size is so easily killed; a tap on the head finishes him at once; they are very common throughout the country, as is proved by the quantities of quills one sees everywhere. The flesh is excellent; very white and tender, and not unlike young pig. The orthodox mode of cooking this delicacy is to roast it in hot wood ashes, with the skin on, minus the quills, of course.

After an eighteen miles' march, we halted as day was breaking, at the top of the kloof. We shelled the ravine; and the Levies advancing from the other side of the valley received the Kaffirs thus dislodged; six of whom, after a slight skirmish, were killed. As we returned, the heat of the noontide sun on the open plain was intense.

Riding out next day to reconnoitre at "the Springs," as we looked down into the valley, we saw two or three horses grazing, and could discern by the glass several Kaffirs in blankets, lying outside some huts half hidden by the bush, at the edge of which they were built. As the glen was unapproachable except by a detour of many miles, we fired one or two conical balls at about 1000 yards, which made them jump up pretty quickly, and seek the shelter of the wood. Having ascertained the range as nearly as possible, we rode home, purposing to give them a warmer dose at early dawn. Accordingly, at 3 o'clock, I started with the gun and sixty rank and file; a fine moon lighting us on the way. B——, following with thirty horsemen, overtook us, after two hours' marching, just as we had halted and were getting the gun into position. Their dark figures, seen sharply against a patch of crimson sky at their backs, all around being still in shadow, as they cantered towards us over the intervening dusky level, had a singular and beauti-

ful appearance. The moment it was light enough to make out the position of the huts down in the dark valley, we fired; the white wreaths of smoke from the bursting shells below dispersing and vanishing before the report reached us. Two parties of mounted men rode off, one to the left the other to the right, and descended the mountain side as far as was practicable. One or two horses were seen galloping down the glen, and the huts were levelled with the ground.

April 17th.—Off with a mounted patrol by three o'clock; over head a lovely star-lit sky. We rode along the elevated table-land, Kaffir fires blazing on the higher mountains in every direction, and took an old bridle path down the Blinkwater hill in preference to the usual route, as less liable to ambuscade, leading our horses down the slippery rocks, through close thorny bush. Day breaking as we made our slow descent, showed two or three wreaths of smoke, within musket shot, curling up from Kaffir fires in the still forest beneath. No one was to be seen, nor was a shot fired at us all the way, as we kept slipping and sliding down the tiresome descent, scratching hands and face, and tearing our clothes among the 'vacht um bidgte' and 'num nyum'* bushes.

Remounting on the flat below, we pushed on through the bush at a good pace, till emerging on the open plain glistening with dew in the morning sun, the white tents of the Blinkwater camp came in sight. Our sudden appearance, and Kaffir-like advance, made an evident stir among the guards and sentries, and the few officers about at that early hour assembled on the earthen out-works; they were soon crowding round us for or with news; tendering hairbrushes and towels at the river-

* Arduina bispinosa.

BLINKWATER

(and Waterkloof Heights)

side, with pressing invites to speedy breakfasts—coffee, ration beef, and biscuit.

A couple of hours' rest for the horses, and we rode on to Fort Beaufort, passing on our way the newly-made grave of an Englishman, killed there a few days before. It was the same spot where I had been attacked by the rebels a few months previously.

Next day a party of officers from the garrison rode out to meet the Rifle Brigade, just out from England, said to be halted about six miles off, at Dans Hooght Hill. They were inspanning their baggage train as we came up, and about to march. To my surprise and delight I encountered among the accompanying draft of officers my brother, a young Ensign in the 74th, come out to take his share in the toil and hazards of the campaign. As we approached Beaufort our band and Pipers met the new-comers, and preceded them through the town.

The day following, the head-quarters of the 74th Highlanders marched in from the field, under Major Douglas Patton, who, since the death of our lamented Colonel, had been in command of the regiment. The Rifles encamped on the green plain outside the Fingo quarter of the town; and Beaufort, which had been almost deserted, again swarmed with troops.

Leaving my brother in quarters, B—— and I turned our faces once more towards our distant mountain fort, riding by a short cut through the bush, off-saddling for an hour at the Blinkwater camp to give our nags a roll (as good as a feed of corn to a Cape horse), and then striking off to the right, took our route by the eastern valley, riding for about twelve miles along the wooded banks of the Kat River, especially picturesque at this point, with its alternate pools and rapids, and fringe of weeping willows. Shortly after sun-down, the distant

fires of Colonel Napier's camp were seen ahead, and an hour's stumbling along by broken paths and dangerous drifts, in the most intense darkness, brought us nearly within musket shot of the sentries. The 'cease firing' and "regimental call" of our bugle were answered, almost before the echo had died away, by the 'advance,' and we clambered up the rising ground on which the camp was pitched, and soon found ourselves among old comrades, whose familiar voice had not greeted us for months. They had just returned from the Kei expedition, and many were the hunting adventures they had to tell, ample evidences of which were seen in the half-cured skins, grass-stuffed heads, and quantities of horns strewed about every tent.

On the following morning, after the luxury of a cold bath under a fine fall of the Kat River, we set off for Post Retief, making the ascent of the verdant Katberg mountain by a path of extraordinary steepness; the heat of the sun was overpowering. Three hours of uninterrupted and most toilsome climbing, brought us to the table-land above the beautifully-wooded ravine, Bothas bush; off-saddling our panting horses at a clear spring that bubbled out of the ground, we lay down to recover our breath, feasting our eyes on the extensive view below us.

On the morning of the 24th, in accordance with orders from head-quarters, we marched from the Post at five o'clock, having a party of artillerymen, sixty rank and file, a 6 lbr. howitzer, and a waggon with tents, tools, and rations. Our point was the dangerous Bushneck Pass; our orders to cover the ascent of the Rifle Brigade from that end of the Waterkloof. When about half-way the waggon sunk so deep in a soft gully that neither spades and picks, nor the appliance of an

extra span of oxen and a couple of score of fellows yoked to the gun tow-ropes could move it, and it had eventually to be unloaded.

As the valley below our position had showed no sign of living creature all day, we retired in the evening to Bear's Farm, a ruin about a mile off, where having pitched our tents and picketted the mules and horses among the blackened walls, we made a blazing fire and prepared to pass the night as comfortably as we could.

By eight o'clock next morning the reconnoitering party of Cape Corps, which had been sent at daylight to the top of the Pass, returned with intelligence that the Rifles were advancing up the valley with a large train of waggons; our party was instantly in motion, and, in a very short time back at its position on the edge of the ridge commanding the Pass. While the column was halting for breakfast about two miles from us, we amused ourselves by looking at them through the glass. The rows of piled arms glancing in the sun; the smoke of the fires rising straight upwards in the motionless air; white covered waggons peeping through the green bush; herds of cattle, and multitudes of dark figures moving about in all directions—in the calm of a Sunday morning formed a picture which two hours' gazing upon did not weary us with. At last the faintly heard sound of bugle was followed by a general movement in the bivouac; the oxen were driven in, the confused masses of troops fell imperceptibly into companies, and the companies into column; while, as if by instinct, the oxen gathering into groups, took their place at the waggons, and all was in simultaneous motion. Another change as striking and remarkable followed. The last waggon had scarcely entered the bush and the rear-guard quitted the

ground, when the whole of it was dotted over with Kaffirs, stealing in from every part of the bush, where, unconscious of their nearness, the troops had so recently been encamped. We counted thirty-five men, besides women, gathered round the smouldering fires, searching about for what they could find.

Nine hours we sat on the ridge, watching the laborious and slow ascent of the column, a span of eight and twenty cattle being required to bring each waggon up. A few Kaffirs on the top of the hill, out of range, chaffed them about their oxen, which they said were "too swift and strong, and even dangerous," the poor brutes being, in reality, half starved. It was dark before one-half the train was up. Three companies of the Rifles encamping on our position for the night, while the remainder bivouacked below, left us at liberty to return to the ruin and sleep in our tents.

Next morning the whole column under Colonel Buller, encamped close to the ruins of Bear's farm, which was to be a permanent position intended to keep a check on the enemy in this quarter. Its proximity to Post Retief, not more than two hours' ride, enabled us frequently to see our friends of the gallant and renowned old corps, and the oftener the more heartily welcome.

An application was made at this time, by the Masonic body in Graham's Town, to have the remains of Lieut.-Colonel Fordyce, and Lieutenants Carey and Gordon, of the 74th Highlanders, interred there with suitable honours, the two former having been members of the fraternity. This was, of course, readily acceded to by the regiment, who were not only gratified by the request, but anxious themselves to show to the remains that respect which duty in the field had prevented so many from testifying at the first hurried interment.

The bodies were therefore exhumed and placed in lead coffins, which we escorted for ten miles, to the top of the Blinkwater Pass. There we were relieved by two hundred of the 74th Highlanders, who escorted the remains to the entrance of Fort Beaufort, where they were met by Major-General Somerset and his Staff, accompanied by a guard of honour of the head quarters, our own band, the Freemasons, and all the respectable people of the place. The coffins, which had been placed in the church for the night, were, on the following day, escorted by the same guard of honour to Graham's Town, where they were joined by a public procession of the Freemasons and principal inhabitants, and the remains of our brave comrades were consigned, with military and Masonic honours, to their final resting place.

A report arrived of a body of Rebels lurking in Engelbrecht's Kloof, and a company of the Rifle Brigade with three officers having joined us from their camp, we marched from Post Retief, at three in the afternoon (May 3rd), with a gun and about three hundred rank and file, the intention being to make a combined attack with the rest of the Rifles on the other side of the position. A strong party of mounted men followed at a couple of hours' interval.

Along the tortuous course of the Koonap, we had, in the space of twelve miles, to wade through it no less than seven times. Just after dark we halted at a ruined and solitary farm house. The sentinels were posted, and the men disposed amongst the ruins. We, after hunting about for ourselves, found an outhouse of wattle and daub, on which the thatch still remained. It was the work of a moment to make a broom of green boughs, sweep the mud floor, light a fire in the middle of the

room, and arrange stones and boards to sit on; while the servants, as quickly unloading the packhorses, produced our rations and grog, with tin plates, pewter spoons, and cutlery to match. By our united efforts the meal was soon ready; and though the coffee was as thick as soup, and the beef tough as leather, we gathered, a jovial party, round a table, extemporized out of an old bedstead; our rifles, pistols, dirks, and belts, hanging on the brightly illuminated walls, our own bush costume, and the rough clad servants, busied at the bright fire in the centre of the floor, produced quite a theatrical effect. A kettle full of hot grog having been duly concocted with Cape-smoke and freshly gathered limes, we drew round the blazing logs and lighted our pipes. Two old Dutch bedsteads, heavy wooden frames laced across with strips of cow hide, which had escaped the general destruction, were put in requisition for the night; but as they would only accommodate two each, and there were five of us, we *tossed up* who should be the "odd man out," and Legge was soon stretched asleep on the floor with a large stone under his head, though half-devoured by fleas, which by the way always infest a farm or kraal however long deserted.

At daylight the ground was white with hoar-frost, and the air bitter cold; as we were drinking our coffee by the fire a further reinforcement of mounted Boghers rode up. In the next four hours' marching we crossed eleven drifts, as on the day before, some very dangerous from the deep pools, and the difficulty of making sure footing as we jumped from one slippery rock to another. Many of the men fell on the rocks, or slipped into the water; one of the Rifle Brigade dislocated his knee, while half the horsemen were tumbled head over heels into the stream.

At nine o'clock, we came in sight of the other column on the hill in front of us. The scouts returned with information that the enemy had abandoned the kloof. Our patrol was in vain, and we had nothing to do but return. Joining the main column, we marched to Bear's farm, and remained there the night.

The road by which commissariat supplies had to be conveyed up to this elevated region had become so dangerous, and nearly impassable, that a working party was sent from the Blinkwater camp to repair it, and we marched on the 5th, with a company of Rifles and one gun, twelve miles to the head of the Blinkwater hill, to cover and assist them. Having planted the gun, and disposed our party on a height covering the road below, we lighted a fire, and were breakfasting, when, issuing from the edge of the forest, a long regular line, of what we took to be Kaffirs, was seen moving across a smooth open flat, about a mile off, and even after looking at them through the glass, we were so convinced in the correctness of our impression as to unlimber and point the gun; nor was it till after several seconds' earnest gaze that even the Fingoes, as well as ourselves, were fully satisfied that it was a large troop of baboons of immense size, so thoroughly human-like were their attitudes, sitting, standing, and walking—"erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

We had with us a waggon containing pickaxes, spades, and hatchets, to take our tour at repairing the road, and went heartily to work, cutting down trees, and filling up the immense deep ruts with felled timber, stones, rocks, and earth. At three o'clock, a bugle from the covering-party on the heights above summoned us from our labours, and we retraced the weary way back to the Post, having accomplished twenty-six miles of marching besides the day's work.

We returned to our work by dawn, but we had found the distance so inconvenient, and adding so greatly to the labour, that I had orders to pass the next night, with my men, on the plain, so as to be nearer our work, and accordingly we selected the ruins at Eastlands farm for our bivouac. It was, however, only a choice of evils, for the night was bitterly cold on this high ground, and the darkness had come on so quickly that we had not had time to collect sufficient fuel to keep us warm, though we had had enough to show us that our little party of thirty men was watched by mounted Kaffirs, who, as the night closed in, hovered round nearer than was quite agreeable. Having posted sentries and outlying picquets, and made arrangements in case of an attack which the Dutchmen with the waggon were confident would be made, I sat down by my fire alone, but, finding my own thoughts very indifferent company, soon turned in, though the hyenas and jackals kept up such a mournful howling that it was impossible to sleep. Each morning a company of the Rifles joined us from camp, and thus our labours were continued for nearly a week, detached sections from the company on the heights accompanying us as we worked lower and lower down the hill.

A large drove of commissariat cattle ascended the Pass one day for Colonel Buller's camp, and as they came up I found it was escorted by a strong party of troops and Fingo Levies, under my brother's charge. Having handed them over to the Rifles, we had a chat over the united contents of our haversacs, exchanging the gossip of camp and post, after which he left us to return to the Blinkwater; before he had gone half a mile down hill we saw the Kaffirs creeping from the mountain, as if to intercept the party at its foot, of

which, however, we gave him timely warning by a Corporal's party of the Cape Corps.

Our principal amusements, besides acting as engineers, and directing general proceedings, were sketching, and rifle practice at the monkeys and lories hopping about in the thick forest, and at the enormous vultures sleeping on the high crags that towered above us on the opposite side of the narrow ravine. Snakes were abundant here, as indeed everywhere else, and among others we killed a "boom slang," a long slender viper of a brilliant grass green, which dropped from a tree under which we had lighted a fire. This and the cobra and puff-adder are the most deadly of all the snakes of the country, but though they are all very common, and were frequently found in our camps, we never once heard of a single accident occurring among the troops, though Clifford, of the Rifles, had a very narrow escape; one day sitting with a party of officers on the ground, and carelessly resting his hand on the grass, he felt something moving, and turning round, to his surprise found he had got his hand on the neck of a large puff-adder! without withdrawing it, he coolly drew out his clasp knife with the other, and severed the beast's head from its body.

Having finished our task, we returned once more to Post Retief, where we found a large and jovial party of the Rifle Brigade.

At three o'clock, on a cold morning, towards the close of the month, a small party of us, bound for Fort Beaufort, mounted our horses in the square of our little Fort, and riding out of the gates, which were carefully secured after us, proceeded down the glen along the rocky little streamlet, that rushed and foamed past the Post. The mountain peaks stood out sharp against the dark blue sky; the stars shone brightly, and the clean air was

so keen that we were glad to put our horses into a trot to keep up the circulation. The party consisted only of D. A. Commissary-General Bartlett, and myself, with three after-riders; as our safety consisted more in secrecy than numbers, our first object was to get down before daylight. After a sharp ride of ten miles across the table land, as we reached the crest of the hill the first streaks of day were faintly visible, warning us that we had no time to lose if we wished to clear the Pass. Up to this point we had cantered carelessly along, laughing and talking, but now it was necessary to be cautious. Having tightened our saddle-girths and unslung our rifles at the head of the shadowy road, which with its overhanging trees looked like the entrance of a dark cave, we proceeded in silence down the steep path cut through the bush. We had gone but a few hundred yards, our eyes hardly yet accustomed to the gloom, when a dark figure crossed the road a little in front, and disappeared in the bush. To have fired would only have been to betray ourselves; so we held on our course, keeping a sharp look out. When half way down we came suddenly on a Kaffir fire in the bush on our left, not more than five or six yards from the path; round it lay several black fellows, rolled in their red blankets and karosses, sleeping soundly, after watching probably the greater part of the night. Almost at the same moment the glimmer of a second fire showed through the underwood on the opposite side of the road a little beyond; holding up my hand to caution the escort, we moved stealthily along, looking carefully to our horses' feet and almost holding our breath. As we passed the second fire, round which also lay the sleeping forms of our deadly enemies, a large dog rushed out, but luckily without barking; had he done so all was up with us,

being only five to a score, and the hill too steep and rocky for a gallop. Fortunately he contented himself with sniffing at the horses' heels, and the ground being damp and soft we passed noiselessly by, and soon turning a sharp angle in the road were out of sight. By seven A.M. we arrived in Colonel Napier's camp in the Blinkwater.

On our return two days after, we had some difficulty in getting up the Pass from the extreme slipperiness of the road after a heavy rain; and when we gained the top the clouds hung round us so dense that we could not see twenty yards in any direction, which was however all in favour of my solitary ride for the next ten miles, as just at this point the Mail Escort turned off for Colonel Buller's camp.

For the next fortnight, when not patrolling, we went out buck shooting on the open hills, which abounded with oribee and rheebok; or rode over to the Rifle Brigade camp, dining with them in the snug little cottages they had built of wattle and daub, neatly thatched over, and fitted with doors; the windows made of calico, and the interiors furnished with rough tables and chairs of camp manufacture.

On the 14th, I started with a few mounted Boers, for the Blinkwater, *en route* to Graham's Town; and at Beaufort learned the news of an attack at the notorious Koonap Hill, on a party of Sappers and Miners, escorting Minié Rifles and ammunition from Graham's Town up to the troops on the Frontier. Seven of the men had been killed, and several wounded. The greatest excitement prevailed in the town.

Twelve miles further, at Lieuw Fontein, where the post-riders rest two or three hours, was a party of Fingoes on their way to the scene of the above attack, to follow up

the spoor; and preferring to take my horse, which I had ridden throughout, at their more leisurely pace, marched with them all night, reaching the Koonap Hill at daybreak. We had the greatest difficulty in getting our frightened horses past the fatal spot. The scarped road was obstructed with dead horses, oxen, and mules, shot in the conflict. Two waggons had been turned over, and the bodies of a couple of Hottentots lay dead in the middle of the path, which was covered with pools of blood; and for half a mile further, strewn with torn uniform, blood-stained linen, flour, coffee, sugar, and commissariat supplies.

At Fort Brown, whither the dead and wounded had been conveyed, we found a fatigue party digging graves for those who had fallen. The waggons which had been brought off, riddled with balls, stood in the square. From Captain Moody, R. E., the officer commanding the party at the time of the attack, I had a full account of the affair. It appeared that when nearly half way up the Hill, a volley was suddenly fired on the escort, from the bush on the lower side, into the advance guard, killing four of them at once. The attack then became general, the Sappers fighting gallantly under their Captain, making a fresh stand as they were driven from waggon to waggon, till overpowered by numbers, and having seven killed and nine wounded out of thirty, they were forced to retreat to an empty house near the ruins of the old Koonap Post. There they barricaded themselves, and remained for about an hour, when relief arrived from Fort Brown, where the sound of the firing had given the alarm to the garrison.

On their arrival the whole party returned to the scene of disaster, and scoured through the bush on both sides the road, but the rebels had decamped with all they

could carry off, including ammunition and Minié Rifles, which, however, had fortunately been rendered useless by the precaution of removing the nipples. Among the badly wounded was the wife of one of the soldiers who had been killed; she died during the night at the ruins, leaving three orphan children behind her, for whom a subscription was got up on the spot by the officers at the Fort. Many of the enemy, who were principally rebel Hottentots, had been killed in the skirmish.

After a long, hot, and dusty canter with the post-riders, through the Ecca valley, I off-saddled, by a train of waggons out-spanned on the green flats of Botha's Hill, to give my horse a roll, as he had now carried me nearly ninety miles, with only a short time for baiting at three places. The moment a Cape horse is off-saddled he rolls himself on the ground,—mud, rock, sand, or grass all alike; kicks up his heels in the air, rubs his neck and face on the earth, more like a dog than a horse; and after a shake is ready for the road again, and as fresh as if he had had a feed of corn. Whilst my steed thus enjoyed himself and nibbled the short burnt up grass, I squatted under the friendly shade of a waggon, joining a hospitable old Boer at his meal of *biltong* and brown bread, and then jogged leisurely along for the next six miles over the open plain to Graham's Town.

After the quiet and solitude of Post Retief, the streets and stores of the town looked wonderfully gay and bustling. An amusing scene occurred at the hotel, where a large party of officers, whom various duties had called in from the field, were dining together. Among the party was a civilian, a Mr. C—r, just out from England as a volunteer, who, it appeared, had accompanied Captain Moody's ill-fated escort, with the intention of seeing

service on the Frontier. In the attack at the Koonap Hill, he had escaped through the bush, and wisely secreted himself in the chimney of the deserted house, but notwithstanding this judicious precaution, narrowly escaped being shot as a Kaffir, when, begrimed with soot, he ventured down from his hiding-place, on the arrival of the detachment from Fort Brown.

This story, humorously related by Major H——, with sundry embellishments, in happy ignorance that the hero of the tale was one of the audience, in fact his *vis-à-vis*, convulsed the whole table with laughter, which he naturally attributed to his own facetiousness; when, on winding up with an announcement that "the gallant volunteer had returned to Graham's Town, having had enough of it," the identical individual announced himself, sending us into a perfect roar at the sudden change in the face of the Major, who, however, quietly requested that he might not be called out, as he should infallibly take to the flue.

While here, I rode out with a party of officers of the Garrison to visit my brother, who was with a small detachment of the regiment at Niemand's Kraal, a deserted farm, nine miles off. The house, which was little more than a shell, stood alone in a hot sandy little valley, surrounded by bush-covered hills, abounding in game of all kinds. Half a dozen tents were pitched round the walls, which had been loop-holed for musketry. The lower rooms, the windows barricaded with stones, were occupied by the men, and the two upper ones by the officers; the rough walls hung with arms and accoutrements. We luncheoned on wild boar steaks, and returned to Graham's Town.

Two days afterwards Graham's Town was enlivened by a novel reinforcement for the Frontier. Mr. Lake-

man, a gentleman whose love of military enterprise had carried him through the Hungarian and Algerian wars; and who had just brought out from England, at his own expense, Minié Rifles, clothing and accoutrements for 250 men, arrived with such volunteers as he had been able to raise in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. They were a most extraordinary contingent; all equipped in leathern helmets, and with "crackers" and frock-coats of the same stuff; many of them dare-devil fellows ready for anything, and all admirably cut out for bush work.

A cavalry escort was leaving with two mule waggons, conveying specie to the Frontier for the payment of the troops, so I took advantage of the opportunity to return with them, as did several others—Major Somerset, Captain Dundas, Assistant-Commissary-General Sale, Lady A. Russell (on her way to join her husband at Beaufort), and Mrs. Sale. At the entrance of the Ecca valley we met a company of the 74th, sent to cover our passage. When we had got half-way through, and near the most dangerous part of the road, the axle tree of the ladies' waggon broke down, from the jolting and bumping over the rocks, so that we were obliged to abandon it. The contents were with difficulty packed in the remaining waggons, already well filled, and consequently the ladies were obliged to walk under a hot burning sun; the dust, which was several inches deep, rising in stifling clouds at every step; but they trudged on with the greatest spirit, and at night, outside the walls of Fort Brown, roughed it in a little wattle and daub cottage, mud-floored, and with holes in the thatch big enough to enable them to see how night rolled on in the heavens, and to hear more plainly the serenading of the jackals and hyenas.

As we approached the scene of the late attack on the

Koonap hill, the mules became so alarmed and restive, that they could not be got past the place till the dead horses and oxen had been removed, and thrown down the ravine; and even then it was not without the greatest difficulty that both they and many of the horses, which trembled and snorted violently, were induced to go forward.

It may be as well to mention here that a great part of the lost Minié rifles and ammunition were recaptured by Maj.-Gen. Yorke a few days after the attack on the waggons, and others subsequently by Colonel Napier, and though the latter were fitted with nipples, made by a deserter from the Cape Corps, they had been of little or no service to the Rebels, for, not understanding conical bullets, they had put them into the barrel point downwards, as made up in the cartridge, the natural consequence of which was that they did not carry more than half the range of an old musket.

On the evening of the 25th, after a journey such as few of the gentler sex would attempt, the ladies arrived in safety at Fort Beaufort, and by the evening following, I was once more ensconced in our solitary little fort in the mountains.

CHAPTER XII.

SIXTH ATTACK ON THE WATERKLOOF—UITHAALDER—RETURN OF EXPEDITION AGAINST KRELI.

THE change of Governors did not long suspend the active operations of warfare; General Cathcart sparing no pains in thoroughly informing himself of whatever was necessary to be known, and having personally reconnoitred the Waterkloof and the Amatolas, was fully prepared by the beginning of July to carry war once more into the heart of the former stronghold, in the interminable fastnesses of which, after twelve months operations, Macomo (or, as one of our orderly Serjeants once spelt his name, "Mc,Como") was still lurking, and now gathering a daily increasing body of his tribe around him.

A "Confidential Order" appeared on the 6th of July, commanding the assembly, and arranging the disposition of three main Columns, under Colonel Buller, Lieut.-Col. Napier, and Lieut.-Col. Nesbitt, respectively.

Bruce, with fifty mounted men, had orders to lie in ambush at Mundell's Krantz, on the northern heights, above the entrance of the valley, to cut off cattle and fugitives.

As it was necessary to gain our position unseen, we

started full two hours before daybreak, and after a ride of twelve miles in the dark across the mountains, in a heavy storm of sleet, which a bitter cold wind drove right in our teeth, we dismounted, just as the friendly shades of night were beginning to fail us, at the edge of the little wood where we were to lie concealed; after some fumbling with our benumbed fingers, we removed the saddles and bridles, and picketted our horses to the trees. The rain cleared off, and as the sun rose, numbers of beautiful green and crimson touracos began chattering and screaming among the trees, flitting from branch to branch, quite close to us, as if aware that we dared not fire at them. Only one small fire was allowed for all our coffee kettles, and to prevent even that discovering our presence, a Boer stood over it dispersing the smoke with his hat.

We were not more than a mile distant from a large Kaffir village, and from the edge of our cover could distinctly see the inhabitants moving rapidly about at the first boom of artillery, the men arming themselves, and running at the top of their speed for the points of attack. Two came to within 500 yards of us to catch a couple of horses, which we had not seen before; but wishing to lie *perdu*, so as to have the chance of a prize, we did not fire, but watched them mount and race back to the village to prepare for the fight.

As the fire of Napier's artillery became more continuous, and the troops appeared on the heights on the opposite side of the valley, the women of the village collected in a knot watching them. As we looked through our glasses, they sat down in a large ring, under the shade of a spreading tree, and we could distinctly see them smoking and gesticulating; some perfectly naked, their sleek ebony skins shining in the sun, but the most part

in black karosses, giving to the group a very Satanic appearance. Several came down to a spring, so near that we could hear them talking. It was a novel and amusing sight to look in upon a village of savages, and watch their habits unobserved.

Colonel Buller's column, easily recognised by the dark body of Rifles contrasting with the red coats, was seen moving along the southern heights of the Water kloof and Kromme, and joining that of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, who had ascended the mountain from the other side, with Colonel Nesbitt's column The two then proceeded to the neck of the forest separating the Waterkloof from Fullers Hoek, and after throwing rockets into it, the First and Third Columns bivouacked for the night at the head of the Pass, having been fourteen successive hours on the march. Hardly anything could be more picturesque than our party in the little wood, the sun streaming down through trees completely covered with long drooping bunches of lichen, horses picketted round their hoary trunks; bridles and accoutrements hanging on the lower branches, and groups of men lying in the open glade, or crouched among the outer thickets, peering at the savages, or eagerly watching for cattle, which, however, never came.

In the evening Colonel Napier's Division passed close to our hiding place: the advance guard of mounted Fingoes, with their usual zeal, firing a volley into us, as we somewhat incautiously advanced to the edge of the thicket to look at our friends. We all fell flat on our faces, or jumped behind the trees; the fat Boers, in their short round jackets, lying screaming on the ground in an agony of apprehension. "*Yij musst niet skiet! Yij musst niet skiet! Allamachtig! Verdamte skellums,*

warrum skiet yij?" Several had very narrow escapes, being spattered with mud by the balls; which struck the ground close to them. The Column halting not more than a quarter of a mile from us, and concealment being no longer necessary, B—— and I rode over to their camp, which was on the old ground of October, nine months before. The picketting pins and old kraals were still there, as also the blackened circles of the fires round which many a comrade had sat, now dead and gone. The graves of poor Norris and of our gallant fellows were undisturbed, and the grass waved luxuriantly over them.

We joined our hospitable friends of the 91st at their soup and grog; and at tattoo rode back to our bivouac, in considerable fear of being shot by our own sentries as we approached. Pushing our way through the dark shadowy thickets towards the illuminated centre, we stood in a sylvan Robin Hood scene, bright fires blazed in every direction in the warm-looking wood, lighting up the grey branches that met overhead, and contrasting beautifully with the cold clear moonlight that silvered the tree tops, through which appeared glimpses of the starry sky. The horses, with drooping heads, stood sleeping in the ruddy light; the swarthy bearded Boers, in their red wollen nightcaps, and our men in their blankets, sat smoking together by the fires.

Soon after we had lain down to sleep by the fire, rolled in our plaids, a moaning wind rushed through the trees; the moonlight vanished; a few heavy drops came pattering on the leaves; and presently the rain poured steadily down upon us. We slept however, for some hours, till thoroughly awakened by the cold, and by the wet which trickled down our necks, we got up one after another, from the soaked ground. Drawing my

drenched plaid over my shoulders, for my horse had the benefit of the blanket, I sat, for the rest of the night, by the fire, in the steaming circle of soldiers, smoking my pipe and watching the big drops that fell hissing on the glowing logs as the fitful gusts sent them rattling down from the trees. At daylight I mounted my shivering horse, and with a well soaked saddle under me, and as stiff as a poker from the wet and cold, rode over to Colonel Napier for orders. The Column was just falling in for the march, and I was to remain with fifteen men, in ambuscade for the Kaffirs who might come, as was their constant practice, to search the deserted encampment. We entered the little belt of wood, within pistol shot of the fires, and the Division moved off. Soon after its last section had disappeared over the furthest ridge, the ground was covered with enormous vultures, boom-vogels, black and white crows, and secretary birds, which stalked about within a very few yards of us. The boom-vogel is a very dark-plumaged vulture, like a turkey cock, with red wattles and a bare brown neck; they go in pairs only, and generally accompany a flock of the common vulture.

After two or three hours useless watching in a wet ditch, in wetter clothes, and on a bitter cold day, our zeal began to evaporate; and as the Kaffirs did not appear, and a look-out, whom I had sent to the top of the highest tree, reported nothing moving on the plain as far as he could see, we came out of our hiding-place; the birds, very much astonished at our appearance, took themselves off, and we marched back by a little hollow to our comrades in the wood.

Two hours afterwards, Colonel Napier's column appeared on the plain before us, the 91st in advance, skirmishing with a few straggling Kaffirs, and the

artillery firing shell into the valley below. From our position we could see numbers of Kaffirs along a rising ground above the troops, out of their sight, firing on them and running from rock to rock, playing at hide and seek. It was altogether a very pretty sight, and we could not but admire the wonderful quickness and cunning of these savage sharp-shooters. Observing some of them making for the krantz, as they were driven before the advancing troops, we galloped off to intercept them. The column having turned off and encamped on the ground of the former evening, B—— went down to see Colonel Napier, leaving me with the men on the hill. In a few minutes afterwards a small body of Kaffirs appeared below us driving a herd of cattle, at which we commenced firing at long rifle-range, causing such commotion among them that they broke away in all directions, several evidently hit, making directly for us, followed by about a dozen Kaffirs. A few of the Burghers, thinking to secure them, descended the steep face of the hill, but had not gone far on the flat below, when hundreds of Kaffirs came rushing in from all sides, and taking a little hollow unseen by the Burghers, tried to surround and cut them off. Calling all my men together, we opened such a steady and well directed fire on them, that they were temporarily checked, and two of them being shot dead by "the Minié Riflemen," and several wounded, they turned back again, and our too venturesome allies, made fully aware of their peril, quickly reascended the hill.

Another night of rain succeeded, with sleet and snow, and a cold searching wind, doubly severe by contrast with the intense heat of the day. When we woke in the morning, the mountain ranges, as far as the eye could reach, were white with snow. The sleet turned to rain,

and the wind, piercing through our wet clothes, was so intensely chilling, that the men who had, in fact, been lying in puddles all night, were nearly helpless. At eight o'clock a welcome reprieve arrived, a party of Cape Corps from the General's column, bringing us orders to return to our quarters, which we did right willingly, and after a cold dreary ride of eighteen miles, reached Post Retief. The only casualties during the three days' operations were, one man killed and one mortally wounded.

The operations on the Waterkloof, the object of which was, by continued annoyance to drive the skulking Kaffirs out of their hiding places, were only suspended for a day or two. On the 14th we were once more patrolling our mountain ridges; the troops had again assembled at the head of the kloof, and his Excellency the Governor-General arriving with his Staff, a site was selected by the Officers of the Engineers for a permanent defensible camp and two stone redoubts at the Horseshoe, completely commanding Hermanus' Kloof, the head of the Waterkloof, and the communication between it and Fullers Hoek, as also the Kromme, and the approach from the west, and, by a mule path in direct communication with the Blinkwater camp below. Being situated on Mount Misery, and within a few hundred yards of the spot where our gallant Colonel fell, the name of Fort Fordyce was given to it.

His Excellency had already built several stone towers in different parts of the Amatola and Keiskamma districts, for the double purpose of serving as present garrisons, and becoming nuclei and defences for future villages; and their utility and value every succeeding day proved more strongly. This part of the Waterkloof being thus occupied permanently, our operations would have to be directed against the lower and less intricate

parts of the valley, into which the enemy were now driven, and as a commencement, Colonel Buller with the Rifle Brigade and 60th Rifles attacked, and completely destroyed, on the 24th, the village at Mundell's Krantz purposely left for this surprise; killing many of the enemy, and taking some of their arms and ammunition, with a few cattle and horses. His only casualties were three men wounded, who were brought the following day, by a detachment of the Rifle Brigade, under Curzon, to Post Retief, which now wore the appearance of a large military hospital; the barrack square, on a fine summer evening, presenting men with bandaged heads, arms in slings, or hobbling on crutches, and two poor fellows each minus a leg.

The old routine, to which we had again returned, of patrols and escorts between the Blinkwater camp, or Mount Misery, where the new redoubts were now building, was broken in upon, by the arrival of 200 mounted Fingo Levies on a roving patrol, under Captain Campbell, who, a few miles off, had fallen in with, and killed a party of seven rebel Totties. From some women who were with them, he had learned that another party in advance, had gone on to the village at Mundell's Krantz, not being aware of its destruction, and that they would probably remain there all night. An attack was therefore determined on with our united forces, as soon as it was dark. But just after sunset, as we were getting our dinner, the Kaffirs came down on us instead, and swept off eighty head of commissariat cattle, which the herdsmen, with their usual incorrigible carelessness, had suffered to be out too late, and too far from the Post. Every one disappeared in a moment to order his horse, and get his arms. The bugle sounded the "alarm" and "assembly;" and in five minutes, some 300 men had left the gates,

which were shut and barred behind us. The infantry took a short cut up the mountain, in rear of the Post, over which the enemy had gone; while two of the mounted men rode round by Mantatees Hoek, to intercept their retreat. It was a fine moonlight night, and we went at a slapping pace the whole way, up hill and down, clattering along the echoing road. At each cross path there was a temporary check while the Fingoes in advance narrowly examined the ground for spoor, and then on we went again. At the end of six miles, the greater part of the field having tailed off far behind, we saw a fire in a hollow of the plain, and pushed rapidly on towards it, several getting tremendous falls over the large ant-hills which, from their peculiar hue, are not distinguishable at night. I rode right into a sawpit, near an old shieling, fortunately without injury; but it was no easy task to get out again, though I managed to do so just in time to see the Burghers in front, blazing away at some dark objects round the fire, which however, being only stumps and logs, did not return the volley. While hunting about for spoor, with a burning brand, we heard voices just over the rise. Thinking the Kaffirs were now in our hands, we crept cautiously round the eminence to surprise them, but discovered, just in time to prevent a mutual volley, that they were some of our own people. In a few minutes after these blunders, bright flashes of musketry showed where the infantry were, high up on the dark ridge of the Little Winterberg, in rear of which we had now got. The enemy was between us; and in a very short time, the whole of the cattle were recaptured, but whether with any loss to the marauders, the darkness of the night prevented our ascertaining. The fort was regained at midnight.

The veteran and gallant Commander of our Division,

General Somerset, being appointed to a command in India, during this month took leave of us, and of a country which for thirty years had had the benefit of his services, and where he had commanded in three wars. He was greatly beloved and respected by his Division, and the esteem and regard in which he was held by the inhabitants were manifested by their inviting him to a public dinner at Beaufort.

About a week after this, having been left for some days in almost solitary occupancy of the Post, Bruce returned with his escort of mounted men and Burghers from Beaufort, bringing an order from the General for my appointment to head-quarters. Three days afterwards, I was quartered in Fort Beaufort. The change of temperature from the mountains to the dusty town, shimmering and dancing in the burning sun, was most disagreeable. Hot north winds from the deserts constantly prevailed, almost stifling the breath, and scorching the face like the blast from a furnace; doors, windows, and furniture cracked with the heat, and the thermometer often rose twenty or thirty degrees in a few hours.

Each morning, the streets were filled with endless droves of cattle and goats going to pasture; and strings of Fingo women with children tied on their backs, and large hoes over their shoulders, trudging to their "meelie gardens." All day long, crowds of dirty, drunken Totties of both sexes, hung round the doors of the canteens; fought, shrieked, and swore in the square; or sat in the sun smoking, picking each other's heads, and eating snuff. Naked Fingoes trotted about on oxen, and little black urchins charged through the streets on calves; while dusty post-riders and mounted patrols galloped in with reeking horses; and native escorts straggled out guard-

ing long trains of waggons. Towards evening, the cattle returned in hundreds; and the Fingo women re-entered the town, carrying on their heads enormous pumpkins, huge bundles of firewood, or grass. At sundown, the bugles and trumpets of the different barracks sounded "the retreat;" at dark, the cicada began his night-long ringing chirp, and, softened by the distance, the Fingoe's wild chant and monotonous drumming continued without intermission till long past midnight.

The Governor-General, whose residence and head-quarters were at Fort Beaufort, had just left with a strong escort for the Umvani, about five and thirty miles from Kreli's "Great Place," where he had summoned an assembly of troops and burghers to meet him on the 6th instant, to proceed against that Chief, who had not only refused to send in the fine of cattle imposed on him by Sir H. Smith, on the faith of his promise to pay which the troops had been withdrawn, but had insolently sent back the letter in which his Excellency General Cathcart demanded payment, and remonstrated with him on his want of good faith.

One morning not long after arriving at Beaufort, the Colonel commanding the Division sent to desire me to see him immediately. A body of Kaffirs had entered the colony at a point about fifteen miles off; and in half an hour, I was marching out of the town with about 200 men, a company of the Rifle Brigade, another of the 74th, and some Fingo Levies, to cut off the enemy's return. A march of seventeen miles, brought us an hour after dark to the ruins of Post Victoria, an isolated fort, abandoned in 1845, and afterwards burnt by the Kaffirs. We had but just lighted our biovouac fires within the square formed by the broken walls, when, to our great surprise, for we were in an uninhabited district, miles

from house or camp, we heard a bugle at a short distance sound the "cease firing." We could only imagine it a ruse of the Rebels, who in skirmishing had latterly adopted our bugle sounds, retiring, advancing, firing, and changing direction, by the bugle-calls used in our service. But it turned out to be a patrol of the 2nd Queen's, from Fort Hare, on the same spoor as ourselves. We were now a party of five officers, and 350 men.

As the two main "Kaffir-paths" entered the colony about half a mile distant on each side the Post, I placed "forelaying parties" on them for the night, but they came in at daylight, without having seen anything, and the detachment of the Queen's marched for Fort Willshire, another deserted post. Having despatched all the mounted Fingoes to Foonah's Kloof to reconnoitre, I went with a party of infantry in an opposite direction, to see if we could strike on any spoor to guide us in our movements.

For miles the country stretched away in bush-sprinkled wavy downs, dancing in the heat, and still as death. The only living thing we saw, though the country was said to abound in game, was a solitary honey-bird,* that flew before us from bush to bush, returning at intervals, and calling us on in the most unmistakable manner, till it stopped at an old tree, where the Fingoes found a bee's nest in a hollow branch. Leaving the bird as much as he could manage, they brought away the rest, which they ate, comb and all.

In a little belt of wood, clothing a deep dell, the dry course of the Shishago, we came on the spoor of koodoo, boschbok, and guinea-fowl, and presently on that of a few Kaffirs and cattle, quite recent, which had a most refreshing effect on us; everybody brightened up,

* Cuculus Indicator.

and the Fingoes were like new men, intently following up the faintest marks with their wonderful instinctive quickness. A few head of cattle were captured, but nothing was seen of the Kaffirs.

At night we again waylaid "the paths" without success, and next day marched through a bushy country to a ruined farm, ten miles off, commanding another favourite Kaffir path. Nothing could be more beautiful than this spot. In the centre of an open grassy glade, surrounded by wooded hills, lay a fine clear lake, formed by ledges of rock running across the Kat River, which poured over in a hundred cooling cascades, where the men revelled in the luxury of a bath after their hot march. The overhanging trees, and tall reedy fringe of the graceful papyrus, were filled with *suiker vogels*, or "sugar birds,"* of gorgeous colouring, crimson, green, yellow, and blue, glancing brilliantly in the sun, and throwing the plumage of the numerous lories quite into the shade. It was useless to fire at them with two ounce conical balls; but so anxious was B——n to possess a specimen, that he left the water, and, without dressing, followed a pair of them with a handful of stones, from tree to tree with a perseverance which, in his state of nudity, was most ludicrous. The fine krantzes of perpendicular basaltic rock along the river were inhabited by a colony of large blue-faced baboons, with pink behinds, which added considerably to the effect of their comical gestures. Numbers of empty tortoise-shells, of immense size, lay about among the scattered bush, which was in great part cactus, euphorbia, geranium, and thorn. Returning from a stroll after our bathe, we found our three patrol-tents pitched; pewter platters, sixpenny knives and forks, and tin-tots laid out on a

* Nectarina.

tarpaulin on the greensward; and a large frying-pan full of ration beef frizzling over a fire inclosed by a semicircular kraal of thick bushes. The Kaffir path, far enough out of sight of our bivouac, was again *forelaid* for the night; and at 12 o'clock we went, under the guidance of a Fingo, with a handful of men to reconnoitre, and if possible surprise a favourite hiding-place of the Kaffirs among the cliffs; but, after stealthily climbing step by step up the rocks, with fingers on the trigger, found the retreat tenantless! The fore-laying-party was relieved at daylight, without "anything extra," as the sergeants said, having occurred.

We afterwards learned that the Kaffirs had left the colony by a different track, but only to fall in with another ambuscade, which retook the spoil, and shot one or two of the plunderers. A long and hot march, passing through Barooka, a deserted Fingo village, brought us at mid-day to Birt's station, a deserted missionary settlement, where, from the excessive heat of the sun, we halted for a couple of hours, spreading plaids and blankets over the orange trees and large American aloes, for shelter from its rays. From thence our way lay through a solitary bushy country to Fort Beaufort, which we reached late in the afternoon.

Next day I was sent with a strong party to escort a waggon load of Minié rifles and ammunition to Fort Hare, twelve miles off. While there, a patrol of the 2nd Queen's, which had been sent to the Chumie Mountain, to cover the descent of the returning Kei expedition, unexpectedly came in, having been surrounded by the enemy and compelled to retreat. A stronger force was immediately ordered out, and my party pressed into the service. We sat down at midnight in high spirits to a hasty supper, having a march of fifteen miles to ac-

complish before daylight. The night was fine and starlight, and we trudged cheerily along the hard road, through a thick bush, the air scented with mimosa and jessamine.

At daybreak we were on an open green plain at the foot of the beautiful Chumie Mountain, whose grey timber-sprinkled crags and extensive forests excited the most lively expressions of admiration, as the rising sun beamed out upon them. We encamped at nine o'clock on the smooth green flats at the head of the Chumie Hoek, a lovely valley, surrounded on three sides by mountains clothed with verdure to the tops, and partially wooded.

Close to our bivouac were the burnt ruins of Auckland, one of the military villages destroyed by the enemy at the outbreak of the war. The silent, deserted street, down which a jackal skulked at our approach, was strewed with the bones of the massacred inhabitants.

We had scarcely formed our bivouac, when parties of Kaffirs and Rebels began to show themselves on all sides of our position; some crowning the heights above us, and others emerging from the lower edge of the bush at the foot of the mountains. A sharp skirmish took place with a few of the latter, who were driven back to their holds.

Shortly afterwards, parties of mounted Kaffirs were observed moving in our direction along the higher ridges of the Amatola chain; and a strong body of Rebels, marching in file, with "sloped arms" came in sight, following a well-mounted commander, who was attended by a mounted staff and a bugler! Taking up a strong position, high above us, looking right down into our camp, they halted and piled arms with the regularity of troops.

Presently a white flag was sent to us half way down the mountain, with four or five unarmed Totties, to whom Lieut.-Col. Burns sent the garrison Adjutant and an interpreter, to see what they wanted. We watched the two approaching parties till they met. After a few minutes conversation, the interpreter was seen galloping back to the camp. He was the bearer of a request that the commanding officer would call in one or two mounted men of our party, who were too near the flag of truce, as "General Uithaalder wished to come down himself to speak to the officer, but was afraid of treachery." They were called in by the bugle, and we soon saw "*the General*" descending from the heights, followed by his Staff unarmed. We could distinctly see through our glasses each part of their dress and accoutrements. Uithaalder wore the braided surtout of a British staff-officer, with the red stripe down the trowsers, a red morocco and gold sword belt, a cavalry sword, and a straw hat, with black crape round it. His horse was held by an attendant a little in rear, and his Secretary was seen busy writing in a little note book. They were presently joined by several Totties, wearing the red coats of the unfortunate Sappers killed on the Koonap Hill; all in camp were burning to attack them, but our commander refused to do so, his orders being simply to encamp at the foot of the mountain to cover the descent of the expedition returning from the Kei. The conference broke up. Uithaalder and his attendants slowly ascended the mountain side, and his force moved off in a northerly direction along the ridge. The officer and interpreter returned to the bivouac. The Rebel Leader's object was to express his anxiety to come to terms, his weariness of the war, and his wish to know again on what conditions the Governor-General would make peace. He further

announced his intention of sending a letter the following morning for his Excellency.

Having come out from Beaufort totally unprovided for the bivouac, my men had to sleep on the bare ground without a blanket to cover them. I was fortunate enough to get the loan of a horse-rug for the night, and hitting on a comfortable hollow for my hip (an indispensable requisite for a good night's rest on the ground), was soon sound asleep on the open plain.

It was not yet quite daylight, when all were suddenly roused by the hoarse cry of "Guard, turn out!" followed by "Fall in," "Stand to your arms." We were up and armed in an instant, and stood in companies on our respective faces of the encampment, and a large moving body of black figures in blankets, and armed with assegais, was indistinctly seen approaching; just as the sentry, who had thrice challenged them without any reply, was about to fire a shot across their bows to bring them to, they yelled out, "Amafingo! Amafingo!" They were the Fingo Levies of the returning Kei expedition; the wildest looking host that can be imagined, their woolly heads covered with ostrich feathers gathered on their route, and their scanty dress fluttering in rags. They poured into our camp with their usual boisterous hilarity, greeting officers and men alike, with a friendly "Morrow, Johnnie!"

The Governor-General and the regular troops had taken a route down the other side of the mountain, and we turned our faces towards Fort Hare, where he was supposed already to have arrived. We had not gone more than a quarter of a mile, when a bugle sounded the "halt" far up on the hills, and we perceived the white flag and two or three figures rapidly descending the mountain; bringing the promised letter. As two

of our party went to receive it, the enemy's bugle above, sounded the "right incline," and keeping away in that direction, they avoided thereby, as we afterwards learned, a deep sluit, of which they were thus politely made aware. No force was to be seen to day. The purport of the letter, which was very well written in English, was to propose terms of peace without surrendering their leaders. His Excellency took no notice whatever of the proposal, and not only expressed his displeasure at the conference having taken place at all, but offered a reward of five hundred pounds for Uithaalder, dead or alive.

On approaching Fort Hare we were met by Lieutenant Lord Charles Hay, 2nd Queen's, one of the officers just returned with the Governor-General, and from him we learned that Kreli's "Great Place" had been burned to the ground; nearly 10,000 head of cattle, upwards of 100 horses, and 1000 goats, captured, and a great number of Kaffirs killed; a punishment the Chief would not soon forget, as the fine he had refused to pay was only 1500 head of cattle.

The following day, on our return to Fort Beaufort, by a lower road, through bush white over with the twining jessamine, we passed through acres of young locusts, a sight as extraordinary as that of their flight; the whole ground being hidden by a moving black mass of little insects about the size of a common house-fly, giving it the appearance of a burnt plain; as we moved onward, the bulk of them cleared away before us with a rustling sound, yet still so thick did they lie underfoot, that we crushed them in thousands.

At sunset we approached Beaufort by the smooth green down, over which innumerable herds of cattle were winding, whistled on by wild kaross-clad herdsmen, gun and assegais in hand, and entered the town through the Fingo Kraals, where swarthy maidens were milking their

goats, saturæ capellæ; men kraaling their cattle for the night, and women of all ages—young and graceful, old and haggard, skeletons or shaking masses of fat, constantly arriving, with huge bundles of firewood balanced on their heads.

Several of the soldiers who had been wounded in the late operations, died during the hot weather, in hospital; as often as we accompanied their remains to the beautiful burying ground on the green flats outside the town, with the impressive accompaniments of a military funeral, the alternating strains of the "Dead March," and the wailing lament of the Pipes, it was impossible not to feel something unusually touching in the death of a brave man laid to his last rest so far from home and friends.

On these occasions, we invariably observed, while the crowd of Fingoes behaved with decorum and feeling, that the Totties, as we passed, displayed a malicious and gratified expression; indeed, we had it on good authority, that more than once, men and women had indulged in dancing and open rejoicing because another of the "roed batjes" (red jackets) had gone to his grave.

The head-quarter Division of the Kei expedition entered the town. The large square was filled with a host of ragged soldiers, and the streets were blocked up by bellowing thousands of cattle, while officers, out at the elbows, mounted on half starved horses; Fingoes driving oxen laden with dagha; and camp followers leading pack-horses covered with blankets, raw meat, and jingling kettles, worked their way through the moving mass. All was din and confusion, for the Fingoes would not go to their kraals, and the cattle had none to go to. They were afterwards sold by public auction in the centre of the town, and the proceeds divided among those who had formed the expedition.

CHAPTER XIII.

FINAL ATTACK, AND CLEARANCE OF THE WATERKLOOF.

On the afternoon of Sunday the 12th of September, as we were leaving church, the 73rd regiment, from King Williams' Town, under Colonel Eyre, marched through the town on their way to join the force assembling for a grand and final attack on the Waterkloof. They encamped on the other side the river, on the Blinkwater road; though absolutely in rags, patched with every description and colour of cloth and leather, many a shirt tail dangling from under the lappels of their coats, they looked most soldier-like, and marched with the greatest regularity, the Rifle Brigade band playing them through the streets.

The following day a detachment of the 74th being ordered to reinforce Colonel Eyre's column, I unexpectedly found myself in orders to join him at day-break next morning, delighted, after having shared in all the former attacks, to be in at the last. At four in the morning of the 14th we left the barrack square by starlight, and marching through the sleeping town, halted outside the line of Colonel Eyre's camp-fires as day was breaking. The troops were already accoutred, and the tents struck, and in a few minutes we were advancing through the open bush along the foot of the Kromme to the Yellow-Wood River, where we re-

mained two hours for breakfast. On one or two of the grassy ridges overtopping the forest on the mountain side mounted Kaffirs now and then showed themselves, watching our movements.

Three or four miles further on, we halted and bivouacked at the ruins of Nieland's farm, at the foot of the Pass where the severe engagement, under Colonel Fordyce, had taken place a year before.

The remaining three columns of attack, under Lieut.-Col. Napier, Lieut.-Col. Nesbitt, and Major Horsford, the two former under general command of Colonel Buller, on the north side of the Waterkloof, the latter at the extremity of the valley, were to move simultaneously at dawn next day in co-operation.

It was pitch dark, when, at four in the morning, we groped our way out of camp, the waggons and tents being left with a small guard under charge of an officer, and ascended a steep Pass which we had not visited since the severe struggle on the 9th September. As it became light, a few skulls and scattered bones were to be seen at the top of the path, though we must have passed many more lower down, where the fight had been hottest. After a stiff climb, halting frequently to breathe the men, who coughed violently, an oft remarked symptom of the telling effects of the hardships and exposures of the campaign, we reached the mountain summit, which was enveloped in a thick cold fog. We moved along the table-land towards the south scarps of the Waterkloof, the point of our operations, but the mist was so thick that we halted till the sun had fully risen, when it partially cleared off, and we observed an extended column of at least 400 Kaffirs moving along the narrow ridge connecting the Kromme heights, on which we were, with the peninsular and otherwise to-

tally inaccessible Iron Mountain, to take possession of its towering krantz. Colonel Eyre immediately countermarching his column, moved us rapidly forward to the attack of the Iron Mountain, and we entered a little forest path leading along the connecting ridge, and so narrow that it barely afforded room for two abreast, continually obstructing the whole column for some minutes. After an hour's gradual ascent without opposition, we crowned the height, when the enemy, firing half a dozen shots, the balls whistling harmlessly over our heads, fled to the bush below, by paths so precipitous and narrow as to be impracticable for anything but Kaffirs and baboons, leaving behind them some two or three women and several horses, which we took. By this false move on their part, the enemy was placed in our hands; the Rifle Brigade being in the valley at the foot of the mountain in front, two parties were instantly despatched by the Colonel right and left to cut off escape by either flank. We made our way down by a path so smooth and steep that only the greatest precaution prevented a headlong career after the loose stones that bounded down before us into the deep valley; the ammunition and pack-horses sliding down on their hind quarters, and the rocket troop proving very troublesome from the difficulty of keeping the heavy apparatus off the horses' necks. The kloofs and forests thus enclosed, were completely scoured, and though the enemy by dispersing, and hiding in the thickest parts of the extensive thorny bushes, succeeded in a great measure in making their escape, many were killed, seventy-one women and children captured, secreted among the cavities of the rocks at the base of the krantz, and quantities of assegais, guns, and native ornaments taken. Half a dozen Rebels, Cape Corps deserters, killed in the attack

of their stronghold, were hung on the nearest trees, as examples to any of their comrades who might chance to come that way.

At the ruins of Brown's farm, in the valley of the Waterkloof, Major Horsford's column, which had marched up the valley, joined ours. They had killed a good many Kaffirs, captured some horses, burnt and destroyed many huts, and stormed and destroyed a gunsmith's shop in the rocks, fortified and loop-holed, and well-stocked with tools and materials for the repair of fire-arms.

The whole valley was smoking from end to end with burning huts, as were the heights above us, crowned with the 60th and 91st, scarcely visible from their distance.

After a two hours' rest the main column moved up the valley to the head of the Waterkloof, two parties being detached to our right, one to attack a small body of Kaffirs collected above us, and commanding our intended ascent; the other up the south scarps to intercept the flight of any dislodged parties in that direction.

After a stiff pull up the Pass, we found the 60th Rifles posted in the bush along the path covering our ascent, and on the open ground above, several more companies of that regiment and the 91st, with many old friends. Crossing the Horseshoe Flat, we entered the belt of forest dividing it from the Kromme range beyond, and found the well-remembered path lined by the 60th Rifles, who, as we passed, presented us with cigars and brandy-and-water, on the very spot where, on former occasions, we had been treated by the Kaffir Rifles to volleys of bullets. A short, but at that advanced hour, most weary march across the open ground, brought us, after dark, to our bivouac on a bleak bare ridge,

where, from the rocky nature of the ground, we broke nearly all the pegs of our patrol-tents without eventually succeeding in pitching them. The following morning, by day-light, we were on the move, and separating into four bodies, again scoured the kloofs on the south side and head of the Waterkloof, and crowned the Iron Mountain, throwing rockets into the inaccessible retreats, killing several Kaffirs and burning numerous huts. The Fingoes skirmished with unusual activity, being in great awe of the *Inkosi Ameshlomani* (the Four Eyed Chief), as both they and the Kaffirs called Colonel Eyre, from the circumstance of his wearing spectacles, to which they attributed his great vigilance and sharpness; whenever they exhibited the slightest hesitation to obey the order to enter the bush, he rode right at them, laying his jambok about their shoulders, and drove them before him into the cover. They did not, however, entertain the same respect for everybody, for, on another occasion, when a young Levy officer tried the same discipline, he was unceremoniously tumbled off his horse and pitched into a thorn-bush!

At the gorge of the Waterkloof, Colonel Eyre with his Staff and escort rode on, leaving the Column with me, with orders to rejoin the main body, four miles up the Waterkloof valley. We proceeded to the entrenched field-works just thrown up at Nels, where we halted at ten, A.M., for breakfast. The officers' pack-horses having been sent with one of the other columns, by a more practicable road, we had nothing to eat, but Captain Jesse, R.E., commanding the camp there, kindly brought us a loaf, a cold leg of mutton, and a bottle of Cape wine, absolute luxuries to fasting men. Thence we marched up the valley, which at this season, spring, was as fragrant as beautiful with flowering plants and bushes,

the Boer-boon, covered with thick clusters of crimson blossom, conspicuous above every other. The larger trees along the rocky stream were alive with monkeys leaping from bough to bough. We rejoined the column at Brown's farm, and a party of Fingoes arrived at the same time with a despatch from the Governor-General, who, on the heights above, was personally directing the whole of the movements. We ascended the valley—a long line of red-coats, Riflemen, Highlanders, Artillery, Mounted Irregulars, and Fingoes; the Kaffir prisoners, with the pack-horses and mules bringing up the rear. At a point where the valley branches off into two, we took the south branch, and the Fingoes were sent up the mountain on our right to scour the bush. They continued ascending the green slopes, till scarcely visible, and then entering the forest at the foot of the perpendicular basaltic rocks, sharp firing at once began; tracing their progress by the wreaths of smoke that curled up above the dark trees, we regulated our movements below by their advance. Heavy firing was heard in the mean time from the north side of the valley. After gradually working our way to the top of the kloof, the Fingoes emerged from the forest, which ended abruptly at that point, driving before them a score or two of Kaffir women and children, and a few sore-backed horses. The women, like those before taken, had their woolly hair entwined with the claws and teeth of wild beasts, and wore karosses of hide, finely dressed, and dyed black with mimosa bark, of which all the larger trees here had been stripped. The unexpected meeting of these fresh prisoners with those previously taken was an affecting sight to witness. All were in a most wretched state of emaciation and weakness, having been nearly starved for want of food, and sub-

sisting entirely on leaves, roots, and berries; their arms and legs were more like black sticks than human limbs. Cruel as their capture may appear, it was in reality a respite from misery and starvation, and moreover was rendered absolutely necessary, for, in their way, they were no less enemies to the tranquillity of the country than the men, acting as sentinels, commissaries, and spies, bringing food (which they might not touch), ammunition and information from our very towns and camps, most materially thwarting our efforts to bring the war to an end. The Tottie women did not appear to consider it at all a misfortune to be taken, for being unaccustomed to a bush life and its precarious means of subsistence in such times, they preferred a dry bed in a jail, with prison diet, to liberty and starvation. Our Fingo allies wished to put the prisoners to death; and were sulky at not being allowed to carry out their notions of warfare. A female prisoner, unable to keep up with the rest, was shot dead by one of these fellows before we had the least idea of his intention; so instantaneous was the act that my horse nearly stumbled over her body as it fell in the path. It required all the exertions of the officers to prevent further cruelties, nor was a stop put to them, till several of these half-tamed savages were knocked down and made prisoners of. One of the Kaffir women, with a child of a few weeks old on her back, becoming too exhausted to carry it, deliberately threw it away; it was, however, picked up by an officer, and given to a Fingo, with orders to carry it to the camp; the fellow obeying with a ludicrous mixture of disgust and nonchalance to the intense amusement of his comrades. But next morning the infant was missing, when "Johnny" being questioned as to what he had

done with it, replied with the greatest coolness imaginable, that it *had escaped* during the night.

On another occasion, one of them, when sentry over a Kaffir, was observed giving a knife to his charge, and making signs to him to cut the rheim which secured his feet to a gun-wheel; the Kaffir was in doubt for a little, but reassured by the friendly nods and signs of his keeper, severed the bands and jumped up, but only to be shot dead by the sentry, who reported the attempted escape of the prisoner.

These, and a few other like instances of barbarity which occurred, hardly any degree of watchfulness could have entirely prevented. It was also next to impossible, amongst a set of men always ready to screen a culprit, to bring home conviction to the real offender; and doubtless, many more cases of barbarity would have taken place but for the presence and exertions of the troops. Yet the Fingoes acted in accordance with the practice of savage warfare rather than from cruel or vindictive feelings; and had they and the Kaffirs alone been opposed one to the other, it is more than probable that every woman and child taken by either side would have been put to death.

After climbing the steep rocky hill at the head of the kloof, the men resting every few yards from exhaustion, we proceeded some miles further along the range, and again prepared to bivouac on the top of the mountains, but had scarcely taken up our ground, when torrents of rain descended, running into our patrol-tents before a drain could be dug round them. The men having only a single blanket, and that of course soaked through, sat all night by the fires in the storm; a keen searching wind sweeping over the mountain top, rendered the

night so intensely chilling, that sleep was out of the question, and at four o'clock when the reveillé sounded, every one was glad to be moving. The wind and sleet at this hour were even colder than before, and though we scorched our clothes on one side at the fires, the other clung to us like so much ice. At the head of the Wolfs-back Pass we came up to the 60th Rifles lining the bush. They were half frozen, and envied us being on the march. The mountain tops all round were again white with snow, and on the opposite heights we could see the other Division shelling the deep intervening kloof, an unbroken forest of great extent; the effect, as the shells exploded far below our feet, was very fine. We descended the steep pass in single file, winding through the narrow forest, and halted at Blakeway's farm, where we found the sun quite hot. The almond and peach trees in the deserted garden were covered with sheets of pink blossom. A party of Cape Corps had arrived a few minutes before, under Captain Carey, with 200 sheep which they had captured in the kloof.

In an hour we were again climbing the Kromme range by another path more to the eastward, and gaining the ridge, looked down on the other side into Harrys' Kloof, in the bottom of which a small body of the 91st and Cape Corps were halted; the long narrow ridge separating it from Fullers Hoek beyond was smoking from end to end with burning huts. We continued ascending the ridge up to the heights, two companies below scouring the forest kloof as we advanced by a wood path so close, that though we marched single file, the whole column had to halt every twenty yards till the front could move on, the bugles sounding the *halt* and *advance* from front to rear by companies. We came to an immense collection of burnt-out Kaffir fires, and places for sentinels on

points commanding most extensive prospects of the beautiful country below. All round where we stood was thickly covered with pellets of chewed root. In front there was some firing, and a few Kaffirs were killed, who lay in the thickets as we came up. In one part of the shady path, we came suddenly on the corpse of a rebel deserter hanging from a tree; the blood trickling from a bullet hole in his forehead ran down his face and dropped on his toes.

No sooner had we toiled to the heights, where a detachment of the 60th Rifles was covering our movements, than we again descended by another more difficult and more precipitous path, down which men and horses slid twenty or thirty yards at once into Harrys Kloof, which was penetrated, and crossed in five different directions.

At the bottom of the descent we set fire to a very large village of Kaffir huts, and captured some horses. Part of the column being sent up the kloof by a path on the right, the rest of us, under Colonel Eyre, passed through the smouldering village, its heat almost overpowering, and penetrated to the head of the kloof, which was one dense, dark, and tangled forest up to the heights on which the tiny figures of the 60th were barely visible against the bright sky. The whole column worked through it in every direction, guided by constant bugling; the company and regimental calls of the different corps, with "advance," "retire," "right and left incline," &c.,—being all issued by Colonel Eyre, who, with a bugler of each regiment at his side, thus conducted in the most splendid style the movement of upwards of a thousand men in different bodies, unseen, through an extensive mountain forest. A few head of cattle and some horses were taken, and some of the enemy killed.

Having re-assembled at the gorge of the kloof, we marched out about a mile further where the bush was more open, and at sunset bivouacked for the night, very glad to rest our weary limbs after the severe mountain work of the last thirteen hours. From the returns sent in at night to the Colonel, it appeared that our column had killed 36 Kaffirs, taken 168 prisoners, and captured 41 horses, besides cattle.

At six o'clock next morning, we marched in a heavy rain for our respective camps, the Rifle Brigade proceeding to Nels, and we making our way round the spur of the mountain to our little camp at Nieland's, which we reached wet through about mid-day, delighted once more to enjoy the luxury of a tent.

19th, Sunday.—Prayers were read by the senior officer to the column, drawn up in the centre of the camp.

For the two following days we waited orders from the Governor-General, riding round the neighbourhood, or shooting quail and partridge. At the edge of the forest by which we were encamped, we put up a couple of the wildest old pigs imaginable, which rushed through the thicket before we had recovered from the start they gave us. In the wood we came upon a covey or two of wild cocks and hens that took to wing like pheasants; but as heavy metalled rifles carrying balls of eight to the pound were not adapted for snap-shots in thick cover, we turned our attention to pig-stalking; the game however led us further than was quite prudent to follow without a larger party, and we were obliged to abandon the pursuit. These novel varieties of game, which may in time stock the Kromme forests for future sportsmen, were, it is almost unnecessary to say, the remains of the live stock of the deserted farm where we were encamped, and which, having been left behind in the flight of the owners, had taken to the bush for subsistence.

Soon after returning to the camp, one of the sentries reported a number of Kaffirs collecting on a piece of open grass above the wood, clothing the lower part of the mountain. On bringing our glasses to bear on them, they proved to be large baboons, trooping out of the forest in a continuous string, till we counted from 150 to 200; all seemed busily engaged in searching for and grubbing up roots, at which they continued till sun-set, when they returned to the cover, following an immense grey-headed old fellow that walked most pompously at their head.

On the morning of the 26th, in accordance with his Excellency's instructions to Colonel Eyre, to make a final reconnaissance of the whole of the ground of the last three days' operations, in order to ascertain its complete clearance, we again climbed the Kromme Pass, though this time by daylight. As we ascended, the evidences of the fight became more frequent; rolling skulls, dislodged by those in front, came bounding down between our legs; the bones lay thick among the loose stones in the sluits and gulleys, and the bush on either side showed many a bleaching skeleton. A fine specimen of a Kaffir head, I took the liberty of putting into my saddle-bag, and afterwards brought home with me to Scotland, where it has been much admired by phrenologists for its fine development. The trees along the path were scored by bullet marks in every direction. At the point where our unfortunate Band-master had been dragged into the bush to a fate so horrible, we involuntarily stopped for a few moments. The ridges were again traversed as before; and Colonel Eyre, separating his column into three bodies, to search the kloof and forests in and about the Iron Mountain, sent me in command of the Light Companies of the 73rd and 74th, and a few Irregulars, to search and clear the rocky krantzes oppo-

site, and rejoin him in the Waterkloof valley. We worked through the extensive bush both along the top and at the base of the krantzes, searching all the caverns and crevices with which they abounded, and rolling down into the wood, stretching from our feet to the base of the mountain, huge blocks of stone that cleared all before them. We forced our difficult way, clambering up and down rocks thickly covered with enormous aloes in full flower, and tearing through the thorny cover, guided only by constant bugling; catching peeps now and then, from a higher crag, or through an opening in the forest, of the main column in the deep valley, slowly moving through the bush, their bugles scarcely heard, as they sounded the halt, or advance, according to our movements.

High up on the opposite mountain, the 3rd Column worked its way like ourselves among the forest-clothed crags, scaling the steepest cliffs, swarming and scrambling among huge masses of detached rock, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, and climbing higher and higher, till so diminished, as to be visible only when the sun shone on their red coats. On the other side, we looked down on Colonel Buller's column, in the Waterkloof valley, throwing rockets into the inaccessible krantzes, and skirmishing through the bush. We found the bodies of two dead Kaffirs; numerous heaps of chewed root round the old fires on every part of the lofty ledge where we were; and in the crevices of the rocks all sorts of Kaffir ornaments and utensils; and came on a village of empty huts, to which we set fire; but no Kaffirs were to be seen, high or low, so we descended the steep side of the mountain into the Waterkloof, and rejoined the column already bivouacking in the bush. With the exception of a few dead bodies

they had met with no signs of the enemy. The whole district was cleared.

Towards nightfall the tops of the heights that towered round us were hidden in the clouds, and a drizzling rain came on, which drove us under the shelter of the scattered bushes among which we had made our bivouac. The moaning wind, that bent the tops of the higher trees, soon increased to a gale, howling along the valley, while the cold driving rain swept over us in the most pitiless manner, and with a steady determination that augured a night of it. It was in vain the shivering horses turned their tails to the storm, or the drenched and shapeless heaps of humanity, stretched on the ground, pulled their wet blankets more closely round them; for the pelting storm and searching wind were not to be avoided, and a day of excessive fatigue to the men was succeeded by a night of sleepless discomfort. We were but a degree better under our patrol tents; for though they kept the rain off above, in a great measure, the ground was so flooded, that we lay in pools of water, while myriads of fleas, (we were on the site of an old kraal, of which, however, they were the only remaining sign,) driven from the wet ground, took refuge in unusual force on such portions of our bodies as were above water mark. Our only consolation (for we had one) was that it was too cold and wet for any snakes to be about, though the valley was said to abound with them. It did not require the "rouse" to awaken us, even at the early hour of three next morning; we were too glad to be moving, and busied ourselves in feeding and saddling our shivering horses, collecting firewood, and helping our benumbed servants to pack up the patrol-tents and saddle-bags; the rain still coming steadily down, and the darkness such, that we had the greatest difficulty in finding anything once laid down on

the ground. We marched up the valley, toiling up a clayey path, or rather stream of mud, leading up to the heights, which were so completely covered by clouds, as to render it difficult to find our way; the cold intense. Crossing the "Horseshoe," we descended the steep ridge leading down into Fullers Hoek, not a living Kaffir to be seen anywhere. In the Hoek we found the 91st, under Major Forbes, bivouacked on the long grass, their drenched clothes clinging so closely to them, that they looked as if they had passed the night in the river. Half a mile further on we halted. Fancy men dripping from every thread, kneeling in the mud, with eyes watering from the thick smoke, and puffing away at a heap of wet branches, surmounted by a kettle of cold water, or with benumbed fingers trying to strike a light, and you see us halted for breakfast. In another hour we were again on foot, and after a march of twelve miles, passing on the way through the Blinkwater Camp, reached Fort Beaufort, the 73rd encamping on their former ground, while we waded the river waist-deep, and marched to the barracks.

Two days afterwards, returning from Ely, where I had been sent with an ammunition escort, we met Colonel Eyre's column *en route* for the Amatolas, whence they shortly afterwards expelled Uithaalder, killing about thirty of his people, and taking several stand of arms and 150 head of cattle; burning his Laager, and erecting a permanent defensible Post in its place.

Having a day to spare, I rode out to Lieuwe Fontein, of which Post my brother had, some time previously, been appointed Commandant, with a garrison of 74th and Mounted Levies. We had excellent buck shooting in the open bush around the station, and killed a singular diver on the vley, with curious palmated feet, the three toes being quite detached, and in form and ap-

pearance like beautiful leaves. The situation, like most of the frontier Posts, was one that would have afforded a man of contemplative mind ample opportunity for undisturbed reflection, being twelve miles from the nearest dwelling, and not a living soul approaching the place the day long, excepting twice a week, when the post-riders met there, and the weekly train of waggons outspanned under the walls. At night, after the gates were locked and the keys brought in to the Commandant, he might sit till daylight without hearing a single sound to break the oppressive silence, except the measured tread of the sentinel and the occasional howl of a hyena or jackal. Next evening the solitude was relieved by the arrival of the up and down mails; two small clouds of red dust rising above the scattered clumps of bush, grew nearer and nearer, till at last the two parties of mounted men were seen descending the opposite hills at the same time, and rapidly approaching the Post, their arms glittering in the setting sun. As they remained within the Post till daylight, I rode back to Beaufort with an escort; the cool refreshing morning air fragrant with the perfume of flowering shrubs. On the way I had some good sport, getting shots at a beautiful pair of blue cranes, a flock of wild duck on a vley, some wild Guinea fowl running along the road, and at some monkeys. The mail was, unfortunately, rather late getting in that morning.

About a week after this I accompanied an escort going to the fortified camps in the Waterkloof. The Rifle Brigade were quartered there, and with the 60th and 91st, which occupied the forts on the heights, effectually held what we had taken with so much labour; not a Kaffir was left in the whole neighbourhood; officers daily went out from the camps shooting alone in places where, a month before, a column would have been

attacked. The valley, in many parts, smelt most pestilentially from the number of dead Kaffirs in the bush. A puppy dog, belonging to H——, brought the arm of one into his tent unobserved, and began to play with it under the bed, a fact of which his master was soon made disagreeably conscious.

October 17th.—Lieut.-Col. MacDuff, lately appointed to the 74th Highlanders, which had lost two commanding officers in so short a time, arrived at head-quarters, and assumed the command of the regiment and the garrison. We were glad once more to have a Colonel at our head, and, not less so, one who had seen good service and hard fighting on other fields.

A few days subsequently, as we were sitting under the wide verandah in front of the mess-room, the sleepy noontide stillness of the town was suddenly broken by the "alarm" and "assembly" sounding from our barracks; the "boot and saddle" from the Cavalry stables; and the *cowhorn rally* from the Fingo kraals. The Kaffirs had swept off a herd of cattle out-grazing, wounded one of the native police, and shot the horse of another. In a very short time I was trudging away as of old, with a party of Infantry and Levies to Post Victoria, which we reached before sunset. Here the mounted men came up with the pursuit, dispersed the enemy in all directions, and retook the whole of the cattle, our only casualty one man wounded.

I sent the cattle back to Fort Beaufort, and bivouacked for the night with the Infantry at the ruins; but it was not to be a night of undisturbed repose. We had hardly lain down when we were most savagely attacked by musquitoes; and a slapping of faces and lighting of pipes began on all sides. Having at last successfully dodged them by laying a branch over my face, and thrusting my hands into my pockets, I flattered myself

with hopes of sleep, but a suspicious rustling among the plucked broom under my head, made my blood run cold at the idea of its being a cobra capello, and I rolled away on the other side; having got a lighted brand from the fire, one or two of the men getting up to assist me, everything was turned over with our ramrods, but no snake was found. The same noise, however, began again soon after I lay down, but persuading myself that it was some lizard or insect, I at last went to sleep. In the morning, under the warm stuffing of the saddle that had been my pillow, a fine puff adder lay coiled up.

On our way back, at sunrise, we blazed away right and left at bush buck, and pheasants which we put up in scores. The bush was very beautiful, glowing with the fragrant golden mimosa and the snowy jessamine, mingled with the blue plumbago, the cluytea, and geranium; the ground too covered with mesembryanthemum, was one sheet of glowing pink. Along the deserted grass-grown road, doves, everywhere abundant, were unusually numerous, running along the ground before us and flying on from tree to tree like flocks of tame pigeons. On gaining the more open country we found ourselves again among the young locusts, now considerably grown, and turned to a reddish brown. The scattered bushes, stripped of every leaf, were loaded with them, hanging like swarms of bees from every branch and twig; for acres together the ground was literally alive, and the "veldt" behind them bare to the very earth. The evil became worse as we approached Beaufort, where the cattle, from their numbers, were almost starving, for it was hazardous driving them to any great distance, and already they went so far from the town that a considerable part of the day was lost in taking them to and from pasture.

November 3rd.—The town to-day was thrown into ex-

citement by a serious fray between two rival clans of Fingoes; the "casus belli" was not easy to discover, but a young lady appeared to be at the bottom of it. The extensive green flat between their kraals and the burial ground was covered by two long extended lines of men armed with "keeries," opposed to each other, and advancing or retiring as one or the other gained a temporary advantage; each Fingo carried a kaross, or blanket, over the left arm, as a shield, and a second keerie, held like the old quarter-staff, exhibiting great skill and adroitness in parrying and delivering the tremendous and resounding blows; running, stooping, and wheeling rapidly about with their whirling staves and waving blankets, yelling in savage defiance; while hosts of young women on both sides, armed with large stones, filled the air with well-directed missiles. The scene was most novel and exciting, and every one entered heartily into it.

The stronger party having driven their adversaries back on their kraal, began an attack on the huts, when the prettiest light infantry practice imaginable followed; the attacking force taking advantage of every rock, bush, and bank, their keeries in their left hand ready for a charge, assailed the defenders with showers of stones, thrown with astonishing force and precision, while they in turn kept up so hot a fire from the shelter of their huts, assisted by the women and children, that for some time neither gained much advantage, till, encouraged by a tall active young fellow, whose face and naked body were covered with blood and wounds, the assailants rushed into the kraal, laying about them right and left, knocking down and clearing all before them. The Commandant of the garrison arriving at this juncture, ordered the two principal Chiefs to put a stop to the affray instantly. One of them, a grey-headed old man, with a

short grizzly beard, ran from one to another, issuing his orders to his 'captains,' and soon the tumult ended, though the belligerents were in a very excited state. Several of the champions had been stretched senseless on the ground, one or two of whom afterwards died, and most were covered with blood. There could not have been fewer than 300 men, besides women, engaged in the affray.

KAFFIR WOMEN.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXPEDITION ACROSS THE GREAT ORANGE RIVER AGAINST THE BASUTO CHIEF MOSHESH.

Nov. 9th.—The surmises of some impending movement, which for several days had formed the chief topic of conversation, were confirmed by the arrival of an order from head-quarters for the assembling, on the 20th inst., of a force of 2500 troops at Burghersdorp, a Dutch town, two days' march beyond the Orange River.

The object of the expedition was to demand satisfaction from the Basuto Chief, Moshesh, whose "Great Place" lay some hundred miles beyond the Orange River, for the constant and increasing depredations and attacks of his tribe, and of the neighbouring minor Chiefs, his vassals, on the Boers of the Orange River Territory, and on the Barolong Chief, Moroko. The latter was a staunch ally of our Government, but did not dare alone attempt reprisals on a Chief so much more powerful, while the former, as being under British rule and protection, were prohibited from avenging themselves.

The cattle of both had been swept off by hundreds, and their herdsmen killed, by this dreaded Chieftain. He openly derided the power of the British, and after taunting Moroko for his blind adherence to friends who were not able to assist him, whose long-talked-of coming was a fable, "an old story they had heard ever since they

were children," threatened him with immediate and total destruction unless he at once gave up all further connexion with us, and joined him at Thaba Bossiou. He also boasted of having already conquered three nations—the Corannas, Maulatees, and the Griquas, and had only to take the trouble of marching to Thaba 'Nchu to "eat up" the Barolongs, as themselves knew; as for the English, whose power was an idle bugbear, he could settle them any day. Many of the Boers living on the borders of his country were fleeing from their farms, in apprehension of war, or from the insecurity of their flocks and herds, while Moroko lived in daily expectation of being swept from the face of the earth, with his whole tribe.

The force with which it was intended to demonstrate to the Basuto Chief that the coming of the English was no idle tale, was to be composed of the 2nd Queen's, the 74th Highlanders, detachments of the 43rd Light Infantry, the 73rd and Rifle Brigade, the 12th Lancers, a demi-battery of Artillery, and the Cape Corps.

It was hoped by his Excellency that such a demonstration might bring the contumacious Chief to his senses, without proceeding to extremities.

Our column, under Colonel Mac Duff, consisting of two guns, 74th Highlanders, and detachment of Cape Corps, was to march from Fort Beaufort on the 11th. The intervening two days, during which our detachments were relieved, my brother's among the rest, were fully occupied in preparing the requisite outfit for an expedition of nearly three months in the desert. In addition to the daily issue of rations, which was not sufficient of itself to maintain an able-bodied man in full exercise, both officers and men carried with them private supplies in the waggons; the officers messing by companies, *i. e.*, a Captain and two Subalterns, had a box in common for

their supplies, whence they drew every three or four days, or when necessary. Mine contained, in tin cases—

40	lbs. coffee,	10	lbs. candles,
30	„ sugar,	5	„ salt,
20	„ biscuit,	Half-a-dozen bottles	
25	„ meal,	pickled red cabbage,	
20	„ rice,	10	lbs. gunpowder,
10	„ pea-meal,	12	doz. bullets,

with 1 case brandy.

The pickled cabbage was an excellent and most necessary substitute for vegetables, which were not to be had for love or money, in consequence of which scurvy had already appeared among the men. Besides the two pair of serviceable boots, and three pairs of socks, which each man started with, we took barrels of both in the waggons, as also plenty of leather for supply and repair on the march. As we went from store to store in the town, purchasing the thousand and one lesser necessaries required for such a journey, as much interest and excitement were displayed by the townspeople as if we had been going to the Great Lake, and as much was felt by ourselves at the prospect of visiting new tribes and a new country, and whether engaged in active warfare or not, at any rate of seeing for ourselves those vast and wonderful herds of wild game, lions, zebras, ostriches, springbok, gemsbok, blesbok, and wild beasts, which from school days we had pictured in imagination roaming over those boundless plains.

On the 10th, all our preparations completed, the last waggon loaded, and the last soldier hauled away from his "doch an dhurris" with friends, both black and white, the column fell in, the Rifle Brigade Band struck up, and we marched out of the town, accompanied for the first mile by all the officers of the garrison, and a

crowd of men, women, and children, of all colours. We halted the first night at the entrance of the Blinkwater Poort.

The third day, after seeing nothing but a few deserted farms, we reached the ruins of Fort Armstrong, destroyed by General Somerset at an early period of the war, when in possession of the Hottentot Rebels. The place consisted of a strong square tower, surrounded by some score of wattle and daub houses, standing on a singularly isolated, or rather peninsulated hill. Of this the Hottentots of the Kat River Mission had taken possession, turning out the European occupants, in a most inclement night, to escape as best they might across the mountains to Whittlesea; themselves living in the most disgraceful licentiousness and depravity, offering indignities to the English women, plundering the farmers, and revelling on the spoil.

General Somerset, in order to break up this nest of robbers and traitors, appeared before it on the 23rd of February, 1851, with a force of troops and Burghers, offering them, at the last moment, terms of capitulation, which, however, they scorned, though they acted on his humane counsel, and sent their women and children from the Fort out of the way of danger. On their removal he at once attacked the place, shelling the Fort, which he stormed and carried; in two hours reducing it to ruins.

Between 30 and 40 of these misguided creatures were killed, 160 taken prisoners, 100 stand of arms, besides several waggons, captured, and about 400 women and children; the General's only casualties being three killed and twenty wounded. The place presented at the time of our visit a most desolate appearance; nothing remained but bare walls, shattered and fire-scorched, the ground strewed with fragments of the dismantled Fort, exploded shells, and broken furniture.

We encamped at sundown close to Elands Post, where we were joined by a company of the 74th Highlanders quartered there, their place being taken by a company of the Rifle Brigade that had accompanied us thus far for the purpose.

At four o'clock the following morning, we commenced the ascent of the steep mountain in front of us; the view becoming at every step more and more beautiful, till at the summit of the Pass there opened upon us a glorious panorama, stretching from the forest at our feet to the blue hills beyond Graham's Town; Elands Post, nestling in its wooded nook below, dwindled to a white speck, and the Kat River winding away down a lovely valley till lost in a sea of bush covering the solitary expanse. A little further on we came in sight of the rear-guard of the Fort Hare column, the distance of a day's march being preserved between each; soon after their red coats had disappeared over a still higher ridge, we encamped, early in the afternoon, on the Sarropit's Hill to rest and feed the oxen. Before us rose the Elandsberg Mountain, with its grand towering cliffs of gray basaltic rock, from which sloped away the greenest and smoothest grass, a relief so delightful after the brown burnt up pastures of the valleys, that the eye rested on it with untiring pleasure. Next morning we were again off at four o'clock.

To avoid a repetition that may be as tiresome as the reality, it may suffice to mention, once for all, that during this expedition we were on the march every morning at that hour, often earlier; accomplishing from five to ten miles before breakfast, according to the distance between the springs in our route.

So steep was the ascent of the next steppe, that even with double teams and terrific jamboking, it took well nigh two hours to get some thirty waggons up a single

mile. At the top of this range the face of the country completely changed; not a tree or bush was to be seen; undulating green plains lay on every side.

After two days across this kind of country, having only seen six rheebok in a wild rocky poort, we halted about a couple of miles from Whittlesea, a miserable forsaken looking collection of Fingo kraals and small houses standing in the middle of a bare brown plain, enclosed by hills still browner and more bare. On the same plain, and about a mile distant, the white houses of Shiloh, a Moravian Missionary station, peeping from clumps of orange trees, looked very pretty, heightened in some measure from contrast with the surrounding sterility. Whittlesea has been rendered famous by the series of attacks it sustained, and gallantly withstood, under Captain Tylden, R.A., who no fewer than thirteen times defeated and put to flight large attacking bodies of Tambookies and Rebel Hottentots. This was our most remote Post; and here we were joined by the Grenadier Company of the 74th, which for some little time had been encamped at the Settlement.

We left the plain by another steep hill, having been gradually ascending from the time of leaving Beaufort; through the whole distance, and as far as we went up the country it was a series of steppes rising higher the further we penetrated. At the top of this hill we entered on a vast plain, stretching away to the foot of the bare rugged mountains in the far distance. Colonel Eyre's column was again seen about four miles ahead.

We encamped for the night at the Brak River, on the open plain; a dreary lonely spot. Close to our camp were three kraals, in which as many Tambookie herdsmen and their families were living. They were quite naked and very wretched looking. The women brought us goats' milk, in grass baskets, for sale. Their idea of the

value of money, which they were very anxious to get, lay in the number of pieces, refusing a sixpence for a basket of sour milk, but accepting two silver threepenny pieces with sparkling eyes.

After marching about four miles next morning we came to Kamastona, the 'great place' of the friendly Chief, Kama. His dwelling, a high substantial building, stood in the centre of the village, which was a large collection of kraals, enclosed by earthen outworks. Its situation and appearance were rather striking, standing totally isolated on the plain, with a background of bare scarped mountains rising in rugged grandeur to a great height. Two miles further, and similarly situated, lay another circular village, a Tambookie settlement, their cattle and goats spread over the plain under a guard of armed natives, whose wild appearance was heightened by the surprise and wonder with which they regarded us.

The grass herbage was now succeeded by karroo plains, covered with a kind of dwarf heath which the cattle and horses had to put up with. We crossed the Zwart Kei, at Stoffel Venter's, a Dutch Boer's farm, lonely enough to satisfy any hermit; the sound of the bagpipes brought out a family of lazy-looking Dutchmen, with pipes in their mouths and hands in their breeches pockets, with one or two fat women, who waddled out and bumped down on the bench outside the door, followed by a knot of bare-legged dirty children, looking as phlegmatic as their seniors.

For miles along the vast plain, which was interspersed with isolated mountains and rocky hills, we beheld in the distance the lofty and singular mountain, called "Twa Taffel Berg," with its two table-topped summits.

After seventeen miles we crossed the Honey Klip River, running between high jungley banks, and halted for the night; but before the waggon-train with our tents

could get up, a thunder storm, which for some time had been brewing in dark indigo clouds, burst over our heads, and we were soaked to the skin by a tremendous down pour of rain, which completely flooded the ground.

Since our departure from Elands Post, where we took leave of trees and shrubs, we had been entirely dependent for fuel on the dry dung of cattle and wild game, scattered over the plains; following in the rear of the other Column, which left but small gleanings behind it, our men had to go far a-field, often wandering, after a long day's march, a mile or two from the camp to get sufficient to boil their coffee. Indeed, so scarce and valuable was this commodity, that many used their pockets and haversacs as receptacles for such portions as they were lucky enough to pick up by the way.

It was a ten miles' march next morning before we came to water for breakfast. The heat was very great, and increased to an overpowering degree on entering a narrow rocky defile, called Klaas Smidt's Poort, out of which, after a three miles march, we emerged on a measureless level plain, bounded only by the outlines of blue mountains, which danced hazy and indistinct in the heated air. In this cheerful situation was a solitary Dutch farm-house; all around littering, untidy, and neglected, with three or four huts to match for the Fingo servants. Mrs. Grant's Glenburnie was a pattern of neatness in comparison. Several of the inmates, for it was a Laager, afterwards galloped over on rough little horses to our camp, which was pitched two miles beyond. Their astonishment at the bagpipes, and not less at the dress of the Pipers, was extreme, crowding round them with childish wonder, as they goodnaturedly played reels, marches, strathspeys, and pibrochs; unconsciously to themselves, they were little less objects of curiosity in our eyes, differing so much from the Anglicised

Boer of the colony; stout heavy-built fellows, in short round jackets of purple or sky-blue moleskin, with huge broad-brimmed white hats, wrapped round with a band of black crape, which a Dutchman wears not as a sign of grief but a sort of finish to his beaver; stockingless feet thrust into rough home-made veldt-schoenen, with a heavy spur on the left one; a small jambok hanging from his wrist; a clumsy roer; cow-horn powder-flask at the side, and an untanned leather bullet-pouch—these, with a green-stone pipe sticking in the mouth or out of the waistcoat pocket, completed their equipment. The only subject on which they became at all animated, was guns and shooting; they were as much pleased as surprised at the practice of some of our best shots with the Minié rifle at ant-heaps at 1000 yards range. Though the roer, from its large bore and weight of metal, carries a great distance, it is not at all an accurate weapon, as might be expected from its extraordinary make and finish; an immense shapeless stock, a rough flint lock, and an ivory 'sight' as large as a domino.

After trekking over miles the following morning we halted for breakfast at the foot of the Stormberg mountains, another steppe, or range, stretching east and west as far as the eye could see. The road up being steep and winding, the effect was very peculiar, as at every turn portions of the column were seen one above another, while the long train of waggons and the distant rear-guard were still creeping along the plain below. We had a broiling climb of it; on gaining the top, a vast green plain was again before us, and after some miles further we camped near a large vley of thick muddy water. The night, in this elevated region, was as cold as the day had been hot in the sultry plains, and though we piled every

available article on our beds, we could not keep warm. On striking a light next morning at the 'Rouse' to dress and pack up by, the walls of the tent glistened and sparkled with frozen moisture, and the water in the basin was covered with a coating of ice as thick as a half-crown. The poor horses felt the cold severely; their bodies drawn together quite benumbed, and the moisture from their breath hanging in hoar frost about their nostrils. The mountain tops all round were white with snow. It was, no doubt, the sudden change of temperature, together with our light dress, that made the cold so particularly severe, as I have felt far less inconvenience in a Canadian winter, with the mercury frozen in the thermometer.

After an eight miles march the sun became exceedingly hot as we descended slightly towards the Stormberg Spruit, a tributary of the Orange River; by the time we got to our halt, in a wild bare spot, called Sanna Spruits, close to a chaotic assemblage of singularly fantastic rocks, we were very glad to get under the friendly shade of their overhanging masses. They were completely overrun with the 'dossies,' supposed, by the way, to be the 'coney' of Scripture, and on the highest point were a number of beautiful blue ibis. We shot several at first, but afterwards they kept far out of range, circling round and round in the air, at a great height. The Boers call them "wild turkeys," from the curious red head, which is quite bare and hard, and looks just like sealing wax. The bird is about the size of a large game-cock, with a long curved red beak and legs of the same colour, the general plumage of an iridescent green and purplish blue, with brown wing coverts. Having got into camp much earlier than usual, we

were enabled to make soup and wash our shirts. About the middle of the day following, we fell in with horns of hartebeest and springbok here and there by the wayside, and a few hours later, saw a small herd of each scudding across the plain a couple of miles off. The heat became intense, we were choked and blinded by clouds of fine sand, and after a long and weary march, came to a halt in a barren scorching karroo at the foot of a rugged hill. The silence and absence of life were most oppressive.

On the 22nd, after eleven days march we reached Burghersdorp, where we could see, long before we came up, the tents of Lieut.-Colonel Eyre's column, which was encamped about half a mile from the town. After pitching the tents, our men were soon scattered far and wide over the plain, gathering dung. The cavalry marched in next morning.

Though within ten minutes' walk of the town, no one would have guessed its proximity, as it was built in a gorge between two hills, the bare plain immediately around presenting no more signs of life than the deserts we had just passed through. Built within the last three years, the little town boasts of several large and capital stores, two inns, and a large thatched Dutch church, with pea-green doors and window frames. The stores, in which everything one could think of was to be bought, saddlery, groceries, ironmongery; Gunter's preserves, Dutch cheeses, Crosse and Blackwell's pickles; clocks, roers, ploughs, rifles, crockery, stationery, wines, spirits, Bass's pale ale; fiddles, mirrors, pots, pans, and kettles; ostrich feathers, cases of gin, tobacco, and ten thousand things besides, were filled all day long with a crowd of officers of all arms and corps with leather-patched uniform,

mahogany-coloured faces, and long beards, trying on boots, buying preserved meats, and stuffing their pockets with bundles of cheroots, boxes of lucifer matches, and pots of cold cream to anoint their sun-blistered noses. Then there were Dutchmen, in purple trowsers, saluting each other in the politest manner possible, lifting the craped hat with the left hand and shaking the proffered fist with the other, discussing politics and cattle, their vrouws and daughters busy purchasing dresses or household supplies; while Bushmen and Griquas elbowed their way in and out for bottles of Hollands.

As the only chance of getting fresh vegetables was to eat them at the inns, they were filled with officers, devouring green food like so many herbivora, making up for the past and laying in for the future.

The camp was besieged all day long by visitors; rough Boers, with strings of colts for sale; townspeople on foot; and respectably dressed, well-mounted Dutchmen, with very pretty girls in pink or sky-blue riding habits, who rode up and down the lines, stared unceremoniously into the tents, and when the 'warning,' 'dinner pipes' or 'assembly' were played, flocked round the unfortunate "Piper of the day" with as much astonishment as if he had just dropped from the moon, drawling out the constant exclamation "Allamachtig! Allamachtig!" We were all struck with the great respect shown by the young Dutchmen and boys to their seniors, lifting off their hats whenever addressed by them.

A party of officers went out shooting a few miles from the camp, and fell in with some herds of game, my brother and Captain Knox, 73rd, each bowling over a springbok; and Gawler, 73rd, bringing back a fine blesbok behind his saddle. We were now in the height

of summer; the sun was most overpowering. The sandy plain danced in the hot air like the top of a kiln; inside our tents, though covered with blankets, the heat was insupportable; and without there was not a tree or a rock to be seen that could shelter us from the scorching rays. To add to our discomfort, the place was overrun with tarantulas, or, as the men insisted on calling them, "triantelopes," and scorpions, which we constantly found in the tents, and occasionally in our bedding or boots. Two puff adders were killed, which the men had found under their blankets in the morning.

On the 27th, his Excellency, the Governor-General, arrived with his Staff and escort, all the Dutch in the place going out to meet him a mile from the town, and firing a *feu-de-joie*. As nothing gives a Boer greater pleasure than firing off his roer with as heavy a charge as it will carry, it was kept up a long time, in a very independent manner, and in all parts of the town at once. His Excellency afterwards rode down our ranks.

The camp being pitched in *line*, was more than a mile long, and it was quite a walk from our tents on the extreme left to those of the Artillery on the right flank. In the close and sultry evenings, when sauntering up and down the long street of illuminated canvas, it was amusing to see the attitudes and employments of the different inmates of the wide open tents; here a solitary individual, in shirt sleeves, his candle stuck in an empty bottle, writing on the top of a box; there a quiet party playing a rubber; in the next a couple of Subalterns, joint occupants, stretched on their rough beds, reading the last *Grahams Town Journal*, or the soiled and crumpled fragment of an old English newspaper; in some, orderly officers, cap and sword on the table, snatching a few moments' broken

slumber; dinner parties in others, and loungers everywhere, from whose tents issued wreaths of smoke and sounds of merry voices. Turning into another street, one saw knots of Sergeants squatted cross-legged, writing "orders," from the dictation of the Sergeant-Major, and Adjutants scribbling away among busy clerks; while sentries paced in front of quiet, solemn looking marquees, the abodes of Colonels, Quarter-Masters-General and other "big wigs." Further on were tents full of tailors and shoemakers, repairing the wear and tear of former marches and preparing against others to come; commissariat contractors weighing and issuing forage and rations; and farriers shoeing horses by candle-light. Outside the lines, round a hundred smouldering fires, where the men collected, not for warmth, but to light their pipes, were endless parties of soldiers of all corps and uniforms; then long lines of horses, and neatly ranged saddles; and beyond all, the guard tents and sentries, with a perfect village of waggons.

At "tattoo" a sudden stir runs through the camp; picquets are inspected and reports collected by orderly-officers, who have mysterious interviews in the marquees; the trumpets and bugles ring out the "last post;" and the Pipers play "Farewell to Lochaber," recalling many a distant and very different scene; the fires are deserted; the different parties break up and disperse; in ten minutes more the bugles sound "lights out," and the men's tents shine white and cold in the pale moonlight.

All the time we were at Burghersdorp we had constant sand-storms, filling the air with a red cloud, and colouring everything inside our carefully closed tents with the same rusty hue as outside. With the westerly

wind came a wonderful flight of locusts, passing over for hours and literally darkening the air.

On the 28th, his Excellency inspected the whole of the troops; the line, at "open order," in front of the camp, extending about a mile in length, and we were formed into Brigades for the ensuing march. The First Brigade, under Lieut.-Col. Mac Duff, 74th Highlanders, consisted of the 2nd Queen's, the 74th Highlanders, and a rocket battery. The Second under Major Pinckney, 73rd regiment, of the 43rd Light Infantry, the 73rd, the Rifle Brigade, and a rocket battery (Colonel Eyre commanding the Division), and a Cavalry Brigade under Lieut.-Col. Napier, composed of the 12th Lancers, Artillery, and Cape Corps. The heat of the sun was so great that several of the men fainted as we stood on parade, and one had a sun-stroke. Later in the day we were visited by violent whirlwinds, that whisked some of the tents into the air among clouds of sand and small gravel, levelling many others in their course.

The Cavalry marched for the Orange River; and at daylight next morning the Second Brigade followed, the First bringing up the rear the morning following.

At 9 o'clock, when we halted for our morning meal, we were thankful to get under the shadow of the waggons: a man of the Rifle Brigade had a *coup-de-soleil.* A twenty miles' trying march through a burning desert country brought us by sunset to our halting place, near a small vley; but we had no sooner got our tents up than a whirlwind threw half of them down again, enveloping us for a few minutes in such a cloud of sand, that we could not see a yard before us. The water in these stagnant pools, that simmer all day in the sun, and at night are used as baths by herds of wild game, is the most villanous mixture of mud, dung, and green

CROSSING THE ORANGE RIVER.

scum that can be imagined; as thick as pea-soup, and full of aquatic insects. Even where the water was clear, we often found it so *brak* as to be even worse than in its gruel form; and of the two descriptions of *salt* and *sweet* brak, we hardly knew which was the worst; the brandy used to neutralize its bad effects, dysentery and diarrhœa, turning it as black as ink in a moment.

The march of next morning again lay through a burning sun-baked plain, without a single object to vary the monotony of its barren desolation, the only sign of life being an occasional paauw or koran. But at the end of about seven miles a wonderful and glorious change met our delighted eyes; from a low undulating ridge we suddenly looked down on the broad silvery expanse of the Great Orange River, flowing between richly wooded banks of warm red earth and rock, in front of us three or four lovely green islets adorning its bosom. The transition from the dreary sterility of the burning plains of the last twenty-one days, shady trees in lieu of bare karroo, and miles of clear sparkling water instead of muddy vleys, was most delightful, independently of the natural beauties of the scene itself.

The tents of the Second Brigade and the Cavalry, which had already crossed, were seen on the plain on the other side the river. Halting at the top of the road leading down a high bank to the drift or ford, the men were ordered to take off their boots and trews, and pack their ammunition pouches in their blankets. The effect was most absurd,—nearly 1000 men standing in the ranks in column of companies, with bare legs, their unmentionables on their heads or round their necks, and their boots and socks dangling from the muzzles of their firelocks. The waggons, with the wheels rheimed, were

let gradually down the bank by drag-ropes. Thus we crossed the river, at this point nearly a quarter of a mile in breadth; the water reaching to the men's middles, and to our saddle-flaps. The current was strong and rapid, rushing with great force between the legs of man and horse, endangering their equilibrium, and carrying some score of dogs far down the current. The sensation occasioned by the swiftly running stream was most bewildering. I felt at first as though I were darting up the river at railway speed, then so giddy that I clutched my horse's mane to prevent myself falling off.

All having crossed, the first thing we did after pitching our tents by those of the other Brigade, was to rush to the river and plunge into its cooling flood, swimming and splashing about under the shade of the weeping willows that dipped into it; every body in a perfect frenzy of delight, many actually lying in the water smoking, and the whole breadth of the river covered over with heads, as if by wild fowl; for every man in the Division bathed twice or thrice over in the course of the day.

The shade of the large olive trees and willows, was hardly less grateful than the deliciously cooling stream. The sultry tents were deserted, except by those on duty, and all flocked to the green shady banks of the river, where we remained till sunset. The shrill ringing of the cicada resounded in every branch all day long. Many of the men turned out unsuspected fishing-tackle, and having cut rods from the trees, very soon caught abundance of fine fish. They were of two kinds; a sort of coarse mullet, and a long ugly fish, with a blue skin and a number of fleshy filaments hanging from his under jaw. The Dutchmen called them *barga;* they were excellent eating, and ran from one to four pounds weight.

Near the drift and on the opposite side of the river, was a small house and garden, to which Bruce and I, with our trews and boots round our necks, waded across, partly to explore, and partly to see if there were any vegetables to be had; the stones were so dreadfully sharp to our feet that before we were half way over we repented; but as a hundred eyes were upon us, we kept manfully on, though with many *ohs!* and *ahs!* The people were very kind and obliging, but there was little to be got for our trouble. Along the edge of the river are found numbers of agates, and cornelians, with green serpentine, and we picked up a great many of them; mine were subsequently cut and polished by Sanderson of Edinburgh, and turned out very good specimens.

This magnificent river is more than eleven hundred miles in length, rising in the Blue Mountains, and flowing right across the continent into the South Atlantic. With great regret, we left this Elysium of the desert next morning at daylight, and were again trekking across the arid plain northwards. Our halt was at a place called Ranakin, though why it should be called anything at all, more than the rest of the desert, from which it in no way differed, we could not imagine.

The mail from the Colony came in soon after we had pitched our Camp, bringing English letters and news, in which I found myself gazetted to a Company. The heat had all day been excessive, and was succeeded at nightfall by a storm of *dry* thunder and lightning, as L—— called it. The flashes, of a blue and rose-colour, were very vivid; the camp one moment as light as day—showing the long line of white tents, the distant sentries, and every moving figure—and the next as dark as pitch.

We inspanned at the usual hour the day following, and trekked through a dreary stony country; a solitary

Dutch farm-house, about eleven miles distant, was the only sign of life visible far or near.

Finding the first vley dried up, we had a twelve miles' march before breakfast. Two or three Dutch Boers, probably belonging to the lonely dwelling in the distance, made their appearance on horseback, with their vrouws or daughters behind them, riding astride like the Kaffir and Fingo women, and jogged along with us for some distance, ignorant of the amusement they afforded the men. The conversation turned chiefly on the disturbed and dangerous state of their country, and they told us that all their native servants had gone off two nights before.

Another heavy thunder storm suddenly burst on us, accompanied with such torrents of rain that we were soon wet through; the sluits running like rivers, and the plain so flooded, in less than an hour, as to resemble a lake; the men constantly plunging into the deep gullies. Though disagreeable enough, with our clothing soaked through and clinging to our bodies, it was much less so than the steaming condition we were thrown into when the sun broke out again.

The Governor-General, with the Cavalry Division and Second Brigade, we found already encamped on the opposite side of the Caledon River at the Commissie Drift, which we reached in the afternoon, their tents stretching for a great distance along the edge of the high steep bank.

We waded through the rapid stream, which is confined between high wooded banks like the Orange River, and marching through the camp, pitched our tents in Brigade on the extreme left.

For the next three days, that we remained here in standing camp, we had constant heavy showers that

completely flooded the lower ground within and round the camp, though the weather was warm and the heat of the sun between the storms very great.

Our reduced commissariat was replenished from the neighbouring and very appropriately named station of Smithfield, where a large magazine had been previously formed, guarded till our arrival by the Burgher force of the Field-Cornetcy.

The fishing here was better than at the Orange River, and the banks were soon lined with anglers, many of whom were very successful. Some of us caught from 40 lbs. to 50 lbs. weight of mullet and barga, with worms or locusts, the latter lying in thousands along the banks. Many agates and cornelians were picked up, and one or two pieces of onyx; sardine, opal and chalcedony are often found; but we saw none. The hippopotamus formerly abounded in this stream, but has entirely disappeared.

Among the other luxuries of these rivers ought to be included that of firewood, a valued boon to the men, and a great improvement to our beef and meal scons, which had a rather peculiar flavour when done over a cowdung fire.

On Sunday morning the whole Division paraded at 6 A.M. for divine service, forming in "contiguous column of brigades," on the left of the camp; a missionary of the English Church from Smithfield read the prayers.

Though two days before we had waded across the river only knee deep, it had on the 6th risen nearly fifteen feet; the boiling eddying flood bearing along in its resistless course masses of grass and broken branches, with huge trees tumbling over and over in the whirling pools. Many of the men amused themselves by swimming about in mid-current, getting astride the floating trunks, and sailing rapidly down the stream. The

quantity of driftwood greatly interfered with the operations of the pontoon under the charge of Lieutenant Siborne, R.E., in getting over waggons with supplies. The cattle, after being forced into the water with great trouble, were swept a long way down the river, many of them sticking for a time in most ridiculous positions in the trees growing on the bank.

On the morning of the 8th, the Head-Quarters and Second Brigade having left the camp an hour before, we marched at 6 o'clock, arriving, after some miles, at the first halting place just as they were quitting it. We passed two solitary Dutch farms, for which, as usual when such *rarœ aves* came in sight, five or six officers dashed off across country at full gallop to forage for their respective messes, provided with empty bottles for goat's milk, and plenty of small change; overtaking the column again, with perhaps an enormous cabbage and a couple of old fowls with bleeding necks hanging from the saddle, or a bunch of onions, and a handkerchief full of eggs. Late in the day a good many springbok were seen, which we 'jagged' for some distance, getting plenty of long shots; but the sight of a large *wildebeest*, or gnu, cantering leisurely along the plain, drew off all the hunters in pursuit of the nobler game. Having already done up my horse and expended all my ammunition, I could only follow him with a wistful gaze. He was a splendid fellow, as large as an ox, and came so close past me, as I led my horse back towards the column, that I could have hit him with a stone. Mortified as I was at my ill luck in having at such a moment an unloaded rifle and empty pouch, I stood fixed in admiration as he came wildly bounding along, his massive bristling head bent down, whisking his white tail, while his fierce eyes and recurved horns gave him a most formidable appearance.

We had fairly entered the game district, and as our Brigade was in front the following morning, some of us rode on about a mile a-head, so as to come on the herds before they were alarmed by the approach of the column. Very shortly after daylight we spied a large herd of springbok at half a mile distant, and following a slight hollow gained five hundred yards before they discovered us, when away they went, springing twenty feet at a bound, and we after them in full chase, firing away right and left. Two of them being wounded and appearing every moment likely to fall into our hands, led us on for a considerable distance, when finding further pursuit useless we pulled up. We were miles away from the column, which was nowhere to be seen; there was nothing whatever to guide us, and as in our windings and turnings, we had lost all idea of our course, we could only guess what direction to steer. The silence was awful, not a living creature was to be seen besides ourselves, and we felt as small as we looked in the vast plain stretching before and around us in endless undulating ridges of brown grass. After a time we saw a large herd of black looking animals grazing two or three miles distant, which our glasses showed us were wildebeest. For several hours we rode steadily on in a north-westerly course, and at last, to our great delight, beheld, a few miles off, a point or two to the north, the white tops of the waggons outspanned. When we rode in to bivouac, having bagged a fine rheebok by the way, the Brigade was falling in after an hour's halt.

Having leave from the Colonel Commanding to rejoin the column at the evening halting place, we exchanged our horses for the fresh ones led by the servants; and replenishing our ammunition from the pack saddles, set

off with three or four companions in the direction of the herd of wildebeest. We soon fell in with several large herds of springbok, though they were too wild to allow of our coming within rifle range; a few blesbok, the largest of the antelope tribe, were sighted, but were equally wary. From a low ridge we now saw the most magnificent sight; on an immense plain hundreds of wildebeest grazed in herds scattered far and near, with springbok and blesbok. I shall never forget the exciting interest with which, for the first time, we saw these noble animals feeding in herds on their native plains, or the thrill of pleasure it gave us as we watched them through the telescope cropping the short brown herbage, switching the flies from their dark glossy sides, and impatiently stamping their delicate taper legs. As we lay concealed behind some large stones, we observed the rest of our party stealing unperceived round the principal and nearest herd, so that presently it was between us. Gazing at us as we rapidly approached, they angrily tossed their heads, bounded into the air snorting and making most extraordinary noises, and went off full gallop, the waving mass of manes and tails flying before us with the thundering of a thousand hoofs over the sun-baked earth, which was covered so thickly with the skulls of gnu and antelope, as to make it dangerous riding. A fine old bull, with long white tail and mane, being detached from the rest, was followed by three of us for several miles, after which I found myself quite alone in the pursuit. Every few hundred yards he would turn round and stare at me, snorting and throwing up his head; when I dismounted and fired, he kicked up his heels into the air, wheeling about in the most fantastic and absurd style, and off he cantered again, his tail whisking round and round without ceasing; every

now and then as if seized with some sudden whim, he would spring into the air and go off harder than ever, flinging out his heels right and left. In our course we passed through several astonished herds with which he appeared to have no acquaintance. Suddenly I found myself in a perfect nest of large holes, the burrows of wild-dogs, when the undermined earth breaking through, my horse rolled over, the old wildebeest, not 300 yards off, looking at us as much as to say, *I knew how it would be.* Without rising, I fired at his forehead; the ball struck one of his horns with a sharp crack, he butted savagely at the ground and flew off full speed. My next bullet hit him in the neck, when he rushed right at me, my horse running back in affright and pulling the rein off my arm. I dropped behind an ant-heap as he charged, and firing a pistol in his face which made him swerve a few feet, his impetus carried him a hundred yards beyond me, so that before he could wheel round, I was on horseback again and reloading. He darted off in a new direction, but had not gone far before a shot in the leg brought him rolling to the ground in a cloud of sand; but my triumph was short, he was up and off again, though by this time only able to trot quietly along; marking his track with drops of blood. Sure of my game, I had just dismounted to give him a finishing shot, when, to my astonishment, bang went a score of rifles at him from just over a little ridge in front, and the balls came *pinging* right over my head most unpleasantly close. We had come suddenly on the Column, and not many yards over the rise I found a crowd of officers collected round the dead gnu. His tail was cut off and presented to me. The Colonel having lent his private mule waggon to convey the carcase to camp, I had it taken there and it was skinned

and cut up; the meat, though totally devoid of fat, proved of excellent flavour, and supplied the soup kettles and frying pans for the next two days. We had often heard that the brain of the wildebeest harbours gentles or grubs, to which its wild extraordinary vagaries are attributed, and being anxious to ascertain the truth of such a strange phenomenon, the head was opened by Dr. Fasson, R.A.; in the presence of a number of officers. In the very centre of the brain, still quite warm, there was found a large maggot, which when put on the table wriggled across it with great activity. How such an animal comes there in the first instance, how it exists, and propagates, and whether it really causes the mad antics of the wildebeest, are questions worthy the attention of naturalists.

Our tents had not long been pitched when hundreds of wildebeest appeared not a mile off. Our Commanding Officer, and all who had fresh horses, were off in a few minutes, and right in the midst of the herds. After some hours' excellent sport we brought in several calves and one cow wildebeest; the veal was very good. A wounded bull charged at Stapleton, of the 43rd, and striking his horse about the shoulder, sent him and his rider flying and rolling over on the ground.

An officer of the 2nd, who had formed one of our hunting party of the early morning, was still absent. At "tattoo," none of the others, who had straggled in during the evening, having seen anything of him, great fears were entertained for his safety. In the morning a party of Cape Corps was sent back to look for him, and we marched off in column of brigades. Though there was an hour's interval between each brigade's starting, the tail of the waggon train of each reached nearly to the head of the body in its rear, the whole being in sight at

once, winding slowly along the brown barren ocean-like expanse in a continuous line of nearly five miles long.

In the evening, as the setting sun crimsoned the warmly tinted rocks of the higher hills, whose base was already veiled in shade and blue haze, we halted, after twenty miles' weary march, at Sanna Spruits, in one large encampment, placing out-lying picquets of Cavalry on the rising ground; the lances and pennons seen against the glowing sky gave the groups a most picturesque appearance. Two or three ostrich eggs were found in the sand, and brought into camp; they made excellent omelettes. Next day the face of the country slightly improved, the grass approached nearer to green, and a fine range of blue mountains was seen in the horizon, some like domes with pointed minarets, others sharp serrated peaks, and one or two resembling chimneys.

The scanty vegetation of the plains was varied now and then by patches of orange, purple, and pink mesembryanthemum; the beautiful hæmanthus, and brilliant convolvulus; also by small yellow and scarlet poppies, with sharp prickly leaves like the thistle.

We were greatly astonished at the frogs which haunted the dry sandy desert, far from any springs or water. They were enormous fellows, as big as a sheep's haggis, and of a bright green; when we stirred them up with a ramrod, they snapped at it like a dog, following it round and round, and showing fight in the fiercest manner.

Chameleons were common, and some of the scenes among the men who stood amazed at their changes were very amusing. The variety and quantity of lizards was something incredible.

Immense green grasshoppers kept rising from the ground on the line of march, fluttering before us with

brilliant scarlet wings, and as in the colony, the lights in our tents at night constantly attracted the strange looking 'mantis religiosa' or praying insect. It is an old story that the Hottentots once worshipped them, and our men used occasionally to chaff them on the point, offering them specimens for the purpose, which invariably put the Totties into a furious rage.

In peculiar states of the atmosphere, the mirage once or twice made our thirsty mouths water in the broiling afternoon, by its tantalizing illusion of large lakes looming in the distance.

Late in the day two distant specks, like a couple of little boats out at sea, were observed approaching the column, and soon proved to be Tolcher, the missing officer, and a Boer, who had fallen in with him near Smithfield, the place we had left three days ago! One night he had passed on the open plain, and had been thirty hours without food or water when he fortunately met the Dutchman, who took him to his farm for the night, and brought him on after us the next day. As always happens in such cases, now that he was safe back, everybody who had before deeply deplored his fate, heartily abused him for his stupidity in losing himself.

We had now fairly entered Moshesh's country, and no more firing was allowed, lest he might construe it into an act of hostility. About nine in the morning we halted at the deserted remains of an old Basuto village, consisting of round huts thatched with dry grass, and stone cattle kraals, similar to the sheep pens on our mountains at home. The huts differ in several respects from those of the Kaffirs, being smaller, slightly pointed on the top, and entered by a sort of porch, the door so low as to compel one to enter on hands and knees. Nine miles further, we came to the Lieuw Rivier (*Lion's*

River), and halted on the opposite bank, after wading waist deep through the narrow rushing stream. We found the banks on both sides so steep and awkward that before the waggons could be moved, the whole force of Sappers and Miners, and a fatigue party beside, had to cut the banks away with spades and picks, and even then, with double teams of oxen, and a legion of whips stretched across the river, all going at once, five hours did not bring over more than half the train, the rest remaining for the night, with a strong guard, on the other side.

Now that we could not shoot, the game became tantalizingly plentiful. The plain was scarcely ever without small herds or single animals. Our track was seldom more than the half-obliterated marks of some trader's waggon of the year before.

The supplies of dung for fuel were very materially interfered with by millions of black beetles, called 'dung rollers,' a kind of scarabæus, which swarmed day after day on every part of the plain. A fresh deposit was instantaneously attacked by these untiring scavengers, who were incessantly at work, rolling the dung into large balls, bustling about, and running breech foremost, with their load between their hind legs, as fast as they could go, apparently to nowhere in particular, and fighting most fiercely with each other for pieces of "fuel" twice as big as themselves, the vanquished one going off in a great hurry to get another ball to roll, none seeming to know his own.

During the day we passed several small deserted villages; the evening closed in with one of the thunder-storms of the country, as terrific as any we had witnessed.

On the 13th, after some hours' marching, we descried a column of smoke in the extreme distance, rising from

the foot of an isolated table-topped mountain on our right. It was said to be the celebrated Thaba Bassou, or Bossigo, the stronghold of the Basuto Chief, Moshesh, supposed by them to be impregnable. It is accessible only at one or two points; very strong and defensible. The Chief's residence was distinctly seen on its summit. Some miles further on we came to the Wesleyan Missionary station of Platberg, a little cluster of three traders' houses, a chapel, and eight roofless dwellings, formerly occupied by the Bastaards, under Carolus Batjee, who, for having sided with the Government, was driven hence, with his people, by Moshesh, from whom they held the land. The Missionary and two English traders had been suffered to remain. After having accomplished a march of one hundred and one miles in six days, (from the Caledon River,) we encamped on a fine green plain immediately in front of the little station, which stood, with its orchards of peach trees, at the foot of a long flat-topped hill.

In the afternoon Moshesh's two sons, David and Nehemiah, arrived at the camp with a few followers, having swum the Caledon with their horses; but his Excellency declined seeing them, as 'he only treated with ruling chiefs.' From what we could learn, Moshesh was not likely to make any opposition; his sons walked round the camp with the Assistant-Commissioner, took great interest in everything, and in their remarks and questions showed a degree of information and intelligence that perfectly astonished us. They were young fellows of about one or two and twenty, of ordinary stature, quite black, and very much of a Fingo cast of countenance. Both spoke English most fluently and correctly, having been educated at Cape Town, and talked of our Peninsular War, of which they had read in Napier's History!

They went into many of the officers' tents; closely examined all the rifles and pistols they saw, and were especially taken with some large conical and Minié bullets, talking earnestly with each other in their own language. Promising to return next day with their father, they took their leave in the evening with great politeness. Their wild looking attendants, black as night, armed with battle-axes, and covered only with a short skin kaross on the left shoulder, led up their horses like regular grooms, following them, on their way home, at a respectful distance. Mr. Owen, the Assistant-Commissioner, accompanied them to Thaba Bossigo. At night there was another terrific storm of thunder and lightning.

The day following we had the luxury of sitting under the shade of the trees in the Missionary's garden, a transition most delightful from the burning plains and stifling heat of the tents. The Barolong Chief, Moroko, who had ridden over from his village, on the neighbouring mountain of Thaba 'Nchu, accompanied by two of his sons and three Councillors, rode into Camp to pay his respects to the Governor-General. They were well-dressed in European clothes, and attended by about a hundred mounted Barolongs in rags and old karosses, armed with roers, battleaxes, and assegais. The strange *cortége* brought every one out of the tents to look at it, and as the old Chief rode through the Camp to the large state marquee of His Excellency, he appeared quite astonished at the number of troops, six hundred having been the largest force that had ever before crossed the Orange river. He was dressed in a blue surtout, with a double row of very large brass buttons, and had on a large white hat with the usual crape band. His hair was slightly grizzled, and his appearance that of a quiet respectable old gentleman. His sons were two fine tall young fellows.

They all halted and dismounted about thirty paces from the marquee; when, leaving their horses, the Chiefs and Councillors advanced to His Excellency's Interpreter, who having received their message, shortly returned with the Quarter-Master-General, and informed them his Excellency would not see them till the morrow, whereupon they bowed, and remounting rode to the ruins of the little village, off-saddled and bivouacked for the night. Some of us visited them soon afterwards, and found the old Chief, who had changed his dress of state for a large tiger-skin kaross, sitting under the wall of an old house cross-legged on a large grass mat, smoking within a circle of stones, which no one was permitted to enter except the Councillors and his sons, who assumed the title of *Princes*, and evidently thought a good deal of themselves. Both spoke English very well, and one was reading an English hymn-book; but presently the "Princes" condescended to ask for some tobacco, and were much pleased with half a dozen pieces of 'cavendish;' and hinted, very unmistakably, that a little tea and sugar would be agreeable! All wore round their necks a curious flat sort of spoon of bright iron, with which they clean their nostrils and scrape the perspiration from their faces; and also, in a little ornamented sheath of buckskin, a steel bodkin, with which they make their grass baskets and karosses. After some trouble, I concluded a bargain for one of each of these articles, as curiosities, when one of the young chiefs telling me to point out which I fancied, ordered the two men who wore those I wanted, to take them off, each receiving the tobacco and sixpences agreed for. It was more difficult to obtain one of their battleaxes or "Chakas," whether so called from the bloody and cruel Chief of that name, or he from them, I know not. The handle, from two feet to two feet and a half long, and with

a large knob or head, is of solid rhinoceros horn, and has an iron blade, varying in form and size, fixed in it. After a long consultation in the Serolong tongue with his Councillors, the old Chief told his son to inform me that if I wanted it to take to my country and show it to the Queen and my own people, respecting whom they had asked many amusing questions, I might have one (he had picked out one with a mended handle) for some tea and sugar, and as many shillings as all his fingers, which he held up. We finally agreed for six shillings and some tea, for which his Royal Highness the heir apparent came over to my tent. Several officers tried afterwards to obtain similar curiosities from the Barolongs, but they would not part with more. It may be as well to observe here, that by a form of prefix common to all the neighbouring tribes, the words Morolong, Barolong and Serolong, stand respectively for an *individual*, the *people*, and their *language*.

The following day the Paramount-Chief, Moshesh, arrived with his Sons, Chief men and Councillors, and an armed escort of about 100 men, though a larger number had been left just out of sight of the camp over the rising ground, probably as a precautionary measure. Three tents had been pitched for him and his Staff at some 300 yards from the camp, whither they repaired; the chiefs and great men dismounting in front, and the rest off-saddling in the rear of the tents.

After a long interval, the Chief came out of his tent, dressed with great care, in a smart forage cap, blue coat, and gold-laced trowsers! and, followed by his sons and retinue, walked slowly across to the marquee of the Governor-General, who received him in uniform, with all his Staff. The following is a translation from the Basuto, of the substance of what passed:—

Gov.—I am glad to see you, and make your acquaintance.

Mosh.—I also am glad to see the Governor.

G.—I hope we meet in peace?

M.—I hope so too; for peace is like the rain, which makes the grass grow; while war is like the hot wind, that dries it up.

G.—I shall not talk much now. I wish to know if you have got my letter, demanding the horses and cattle?

M.—I have received the letter, but know not where I shall get the cattle. Are the 10,000 head you demand, a fine for the thefts of my people, in addition to the cattle stolen?

G.—I demand only 10,000 head, though your people have stolen many more. This is a just award, and must be paid in three days.

M.—Do the three days count from yesterday, or to-day?

G.—To-day is the first of the three.

M.—The time is short, and the cattle many. Allow me six days to collect them. I have not power over my people to make them do it.

G.—If you are not able to collect them, I must go and do it; and, if resistance is made, it will be war, and I shall not be content with 10,000, but shall take all I can.

M.—Do not talk of war! for, however anxious I may be to avoid it, you know that a dog, when beaten, will show his teeth.

G.—It will therefore be better that you should give up the cattle, than that I should go for them.

M.—I wish for peace, but have the same difficulty with my people, that you have in your country; your prisons are never empty, and I have thieves among my people.

G.—Then bring the thieves to me, that I may hang them.

M.—I do not wish you to hang them, but to talk to them. If you hang them, they cannot talk.

G.—If I hang them they cannot steal. But I am not here to talk. I have said, if you do not give up the cattle in three days, I must come and take them.

M.—I beseech you not to talk of war.

G.—I have no more to say. Go, and collect the cattle as quickly as possible, or I shall have to come to Thaba Bossigo.

M.—Do not talk of coming to Thaba Bossigo. I will go at once, and perhaps God will help me.

After leaving the Governor-General, but before quitting the camp, Moshesh sent to beg that this day might not count in the three, to which his Excellency assented.

16th.—At six o'clock, the whole Division was reviewed by the Commander-in-chief, "marching past," and performing various evolutions and movements. A party of Engineer officers being ordered to proceed with a small escort to the drift on the Caledon River, some miles in front, to survey its practicability, and the nature of the country, in case of our further advance, I got leave to accompany them. After riding about four miles, we came on three villages very near together, all inhabited, and with numerous herds of cattle, and many horses feeding around. As we approached both unexpectedly and rapidly, we had, what would have been otherwise impossible, a full opportunity of seeing the natives at their accustomed employments, as we passed within pistol shot. The men were smoking, sitting and standing in groups, and looked dumbfoundered at seeing us; the women, who were pounding corn, or hoeing their millet and sweet cane, fled with their children, on our sudden appearance, to their huts in the greatest consternation, never having seen so many white men before. As we

rode through the herds of cattle, the terrified keepers, whose only covering was a narrow belt of dressed hide round the groin, jumped up from the long grass, and with a short assegai drove in the cattle as fast as they could go.

Having sent one of our escort into the river at the first drift, which was running very strong, it was found too deep for waggons, infantry, or artillery, and we proceeded seven miles further up along the bank. Our guide, a trader, having come to the extent of his former travels, was quite out of his reckoning. At the next drift, we surprised a party of a dozen girls and women bathing, and filling their calabashes. They gave a yell of alarm as we suddenly appeared on the top of the bank, and rushing out of the water up the opposite path all dripping, made off to a large village perched on the top of a rocky hill about a mile off, constantly looking back to see if we were pursuing. Their dress was of the same primeval description as that of the men, coverings of skin, and they wore in addition large white necklaces.

We saw the small French Missionary station of Berea; and at some distance Moshesh's *Great Place* on the Thaba Bossigo. After the drift had been carefully examined by Siborne, R.E., who swam his horse across the swollen stream, and Tylden and Stanton had taken the necessary points and bearings for their survey of the country, we returned along the base of a fine hill, on which were two or three little villages of stone kraals and round huts, from whence we saw several natives peering down on us. Shortly we were caught in a terrific storm of hail, thunder, and lightning, and had the greatest difficulty in keeping our road, and making the horses face the hail, which pelted down with such force as to hurt us very much, and render them frantic. No one can

have any just idea of an African thunderstorm without experiencing it. The lightning ran along the ground, and the rain streamed down in such torrents, that we were all drenched to the skin in a minute, and sobbing with the sudden cold. As we rode across the flooded plain, the water flew from our horses' feet in sheets of spray, yet in a quarter of an hour the sun was out again as bright as ever. A party of civilians riding out from the camp, as soon as they caught sight of us with our Fingo escort, turned round, and went back at full gallop, tearing away before us as hard as they could go, to our great astonishment, and were very soon out of sight. On arriving at the camp, we were congratulated on our safe return, and found everybody in a state of excitement at the narrow escape of a party from the camp, that had been nearly cut off by a large mounted force of Basutos, in fact barely getting away with their lives! Our version of the matter changed the aspect of affairs entirely, and the fugitives laughed as heartily as any one.

One or two large snakes were killed among the ruins of the village, but the camp was free from them, although we had other visitors, tarantulas being very common; and after the second day, the whole of the tents within were literally blackened with common flies, which covered everything, hot or cold, the moment it appeared; in one or two, jerboas made night visits, rather astonishing us when the daylight showed the large holes and heaps of fresh mould left on the floor. B——n, who was particularly nervous about all small animals, seemed specially selected for annoyance; the holes filled up with stones and empty bottles overnight were succeeded by fresh ones, and he declared that his tormentors awoke him by dancing and cheering round his tent in the grey light of early dawn, and so alarmed him,

that he dared not put his arm out of bed to throw a boot at them, but lay in a cold perspiration till people began to move about, when they disappeared.

The water here was no better than the nauseating stuff we had so often to drink in the field; and besides the usual thickening of aquatic insects, still more objectionable animals found their way to table in the muddy mixture. B—— one day very narrowly escaped tossing off a fine young frog in his tumbler of brandy and water.

The waggon drivers, &c., of whom, with upwards of 150 waggons and 2000 trek oxen, we had a perfect army in camp, as usual took advantage of the halt to lay in a stock of biltong; and every bush, waggon wheel, and disselboom, was covered with strips of raw meat drying in the sun.

Close to camp, and high up on the hill, were some fine rocks, where, under the shadow of their overhanging masses, we sat during the heat of the day, looking down on the busy camp, and scanning the plain for miles beyond. While thus occupied on the 19th, the last of the three days granted Moshesh, we descried large herds of cattle approaching from Thaba Bossigo. At three in the afternoon they were visible from the camp; and soon afterwards a body of mounted Basutos appeared, armed with assegais, stuck in a sort of quiver at the back, with battle-axes at the saddle-bow, and guns, keeries, and large shields of ox-hide, followed by a vast herd of cattle stretching across the plain, and coming on at a trot, driven by upwards of 500 natives. They were wild looking-fellows, with strange head-gear of jackals' tails, ostrich feathers, tiger skin, and gnu manes; with karosses, chakas, and clubs. Though differing in no respect from the Kaffir

personally, their language or dialect is widely dissimilar, and sounded to us more musical. Our interpreters and Fingoes could not understand it in the least, though many travellers have affirmed the two languages are in reality the same. Their saddles were most primitive affairs, the stirrups, ingeniously contrived out of a broad strip of hide, divided towards the lower end for about six inches, and forming, with a piece of hard wood as a base, a triangle for the foot. All wore the bodkins and "lebakos," or iron strigils before mentioned, suspended from the neck by a strip of finely dressed skin. After the greatest difficulty, and with the assistance of Jary, 12th Lancers, I obtained one of each for the small consideration of five shillings in silver three-penny pieces, and eight sticks of Cavendish tobacco. They were all savage, surly-looking fellows, which might perhaps be attributed to the nature of their errand, though one could not expect any very pleasing expression in a people who less than twenty years ago were cannibals, and dressed their hair with human grease.

The cattle having been numbered, and found to amount only to 3500, Prince Nehemiah, who had come with them, was desired to inform his *Governor*, that unless the remainder arrived the following morning, we should be obliged to come and fetch them.

As an earnest of this threat, which produced no effect, the Second Brigade, with two companies of the 74th Highlanders, marched at daylight for the upper drift on the Caledon leading to Moletsani's country; and there formed a flying camp. But this demonstration not having the desired effect, the Governor-General followed at dawn on the 20th, with the Cavalry Brigade and two guns. Moving along the western and southern base of the Berea mountain, on the flat summit of which the

enemy had collected their cattle, His Excellency advanced to parley with a party of armed Basutos, who immediately fired on him. Hostilities having thus commenced, the cavalry were advanced in extended order, and with a couple of rounds of shrapnel from the guns, drove them off. His Excellency, who, notwithstanding that his conspicuous appearance drew fire on him from all directions, continued the whole day coolly smoking his cheroot, and issuing his orders, then crossed the Rietspruit, a deep mountain stream, and took up a position on an eminence commanding the approaches of the other two columns, which were to join him here,—viz., the Infantry Brigade, after clearing the summit of the mountain, and the Cavalry by moving round its north and east faces. Colonel Eyre, having sent up a storming party of the Rifle Brigade, under Lieutenant Hon. L. Curzon, and the Light Company of the 73rd, under Lieutenant Gawler (who led their men up rocks almost inaccessible, under a heavy fire from the enemy, and drove them from their position), ascended the mountain, and sweeping the top, completely dispersed the enemy, capturing 1500 head of cattle. Unfortunately, Captain Faunce, Deputy-Assistant Quarter-Master General, and two or three of the 73rd, were surprised and cut down by a party of Basutos, several of whom having the white forage caps and the lances of the 12th (killed in Colonel Napier's column), were mistaken for our own troops, an error not discovered till it was too late to be remedied.

Simultaneously with the above movements, Colonel Napier's Brigade having proceeded along the valley on the north-east of the mountain, ascended it at a point where large droves of cattle were observed; and after some hard fighting—in which, more than once, they came

to close quarters, hand to hand, with lance and battle-axe, twenty-five Lancers and two of the Cape Mounted Rifles being killed, with a great number of the enemy—captured 4000 head of cattle, besides fifty-three horses, and many goats, with the whole of which they returned to the flying camp.

When the Infantry Brigade joined his Excellency, the enemy, numbering between 6000 and 7000 horsemen, manœuvring with the regularity and precision of English troops, endeavoured to turn their right flank; attacking both front and rear simultaneously, but were repulsed with great loss in each attempt by the steady gallantry of the troops. However, in spite of their repulse, they pertinaciously returned to the assault of the bivouac on the hill-side, where the cattle had been driven for the night into some old stone kraals, and though suffering heavy loss, continued in thousands attacking the position on all sides at once, till after dark, when they were finally dispersed by a round of canister, and the weary troops, who since sunrise had never ceased a single moment from their arduous toils, lay down to rest. When day dawned next morning there was not a Basuto to be seen. The casualties on our side, owing to the overpowering force of the enemy, and the difficult nature of the ground, were very severe: Captain Faunce, Dep.-Asst.-Quar.-Mr.-General, and thirty-seven men, being killed, and Captain Wellesley, Asst.-Adjt.-General, Lieut. Hon. H. Annesley, 43rd, and fourteen men wounded.

The captured cattle being a great incumbrance, the infantry were sent back with them to the camp, his Excellency announcing his intention of resuming operations the following day against the Chief's residence; a few cattle and horses abandoned on the plain were added on the route; but soon after arriving at the Caledon camp,

a warrior bearing a flag of truce presented himself with a letter from Moshesh, written in Council at midnight, after the engagement. The epistle ran thus:—

"*Thaba Bossigo,*
"*Midnight, December 20th,* 1852.

"Your Excellency,—This day you have fought against my people, and taken much cattle. As the object for which you have come is to have a compensation for Boers, I beg you will be satisfied with what you have taken. I entreat peace from you. You have shown your power; you have chastised; let it be enough, I pray you, and let me no longer be considered an enemy of the Queen. I will try all I can to keep my people in order for the future. Your humble servant,

"MOSHESH."

His Excellency having seen fit to accept this submission, concluded a peace with the humbled Chief, and returned with his Staff—Colonel Cloete, Quarter-Master-General; Colonel Seymour, Military Secretary; Captain Lord A. Russell, Dep.-Asst.-Quarter-Master-General; Captain Hon. R. Curzon, Captain Hon. G. Elliott, Captain Tylden, Lieut. Greville, Lieut. Lord C. Hay, and Lieut. Earle, to the standing camp at Platberg; and the troops afterwards arriving with the spoil, the cattle were distributed. One thousand head were given to Moroko, two hundred and fifty to Taibosch, and two hundred and fifty to Carolus Batje for their firm adherence to the government, and as a compensation for their losses in consequence; the remainder were granted as a boon to the Boers, who had suffered to a great extent by the plundering and robberies of the Basutos. The loud bellowing of the spoil, in which our own 2000 draught oxen joined, was so insufferable, that

we were heartily glad to see them driven off by the Barolongs to Bloem Fontein, going full canter across the plain. There were so many young calves, which of course were obliged to be left behind, that one was allowed to each officer, and also to every soldier's 'mess,' and the camp was full of veal. There was a sale of captured horses, generally young colts, which fetched prices varying from eight shillings to eight sovereigns. One or two particularly 'choice lots' brought ten or twelve pounds.

On the 23rd, a Gazette was published in camp, printed at the Mission-house press, containing all the Despatches, and Orders connected with the affair. The force was ordered to return to the colony.

CHAPTER XV.

MARCH DOWN THE COUNTRY—TERMINATION OF THE WAR.

C——, who had been unwell from the time of our tremendous soaking the day we waded the Caledon river, when we had to remain two hours standing in wet clothes, waiting for the waggons crossing the drift, had become so ill as to be unable to march. The excellent missionary at Platberg, Mr. Giddy, had shown him the greatest kindness possible, doing everything in his power to add what comforts he could to the hard fare of camp life. He was now placed in an ox waggon, which, jolting and bumping over the rocky road, crept slowly on step by step of the long and weary journey homewards. At our first night's halt, the Assistant-Commissioner, Mr. Owen, who had ridden over to Thaba Bossigo, rejoined us. He had had a friendly interview with Moshesh, who gave him a capital breakfast, with European appliances of great variety; and among other luxuries, placed before him a bottle of port and a couple of large jars of Gunter's preserves! He strongly expressed his anxiety to maintain peace, and stand on an amicable footing with the Government; and when Mr. Owen mentioned his wish that the bodies of our brave men who had fallen, should be interred, he sent his sons with a few Basutos

to dig graves, and assist Mr. Owen's party. The body of Capt. Faunce was recognised, and laid in a separate grave.

December 25th, Christmas day.—Scorched by the sun from above and the sand under foot, the long waving column moved slowly across the dead sunbaked karroo, and when late in the day it halted at Lieuw Rivier, we felt as though we would give all we possessed for a little of the ice and snow with which our far distant friends were doubtless at that moment surrounded. Some attempted the manufacture of a plum pudding with corn meal, black sugar, and currants boiled in a tin-tot tied up in a pocket handkerchief; but it was even a more miserable failure than the roast beef, which, instead of being made into the usual soup, was placed upon the table like a piece of burnt leather. The generous liquor with which these luxuries were washed down, was Dutch gin and muddy water.

In the evenings, as soon as the glowing sun had sunk behind the distant ranges of pale purple mountains, the temperature was delightful. We collected in knots, and stretched on plaids or tiger-skins on the sand, enjoyed our pipes, watching the few light and brightly tinted clouds that floated airily in the warm sky; the droves of cattle and mules, and troops of cavalry horses returning from their short pasture; the busy camp before us, where, as the darkness fell, the glowing fires showed themselves; or the bright stars that shone out one after another in the blue heaven like so many globes of light. Moments such as these, compensated for the toil and heat of the day.

27th.—On arriving at our encamping ground, C—— was so much worse that a Medical Board was held on him at once, and leave to England recommended; be-

fore the rear of the column was up, we were off after the Governor-General's column, which had gone on in advance. Colonel Mac Duff, in the kindest and most generous manner, tumbled everything out of his own mule waggon, and gave it up at once, to enable us to overtake and keep up with them. After a sharp trot of ten miles without any escort whatever, we were very glad to see his Excellency's little camp about a mile a head. The whole plain at this point was completely whitened with endless flocks of migratory storks, apparently feeding on the locusts which were flying over in clouds. They were quite close to the waggon track on both sides. The unexpected appearance of a single horseman and waggon approaching across the solitary plain at such a late hour, brought out several officers, by whom we were most cordially and hospitably received, his Excellency also kindly sending to offer the invalid anything his better cuisine afforded.

At three o'clock next morning, we trekked along with the cavalry and mule train at six miles an hour, a change most delightful after the slow pace of the ox waggons. Numbers of springbok and blesbok were seen in every direction, and 'jagged' whenever near enough to render it easy to overtake the party again, which was a very different affair from catching up the infantry column. After a good thirty miles, we came early in the afternoon to the Caledon River, which, though running very strong, was just fordable for the waggons, and encamped on the opposite bank.

C——, who had eaten nothing for four days but a few teaspoonfuls of dirty brown arrow-root, made with muddy vley water, and sweetened with black ration sugar, grew rapidly worse, and towards evening became quite unconscious; all night long, as I watched under the waggon, he wandered, and talked incoherently of home.

When all were gone to rest, the most perfect silence reigned through the camp: the night was splendid,—the clear bright heavens were studded with brilliant stars down to the very horizon,—the moon glided along in silvery light over the vast plain, on which imagination pictured thousands of wild animals sleeping or feeding in undisturbed enjoyment,—till the creaking of the waggon, as poor C—— tossed about on his miserable bed, recalled one's thoughts to realities.

It wanted an hour to daylight, and the stars still shone with undiminished brightness, when suddenly the loud clear notes of the reveillé, never before welcomed, rung out from the head-quarter tent, and were taken up and repeated on all sides by the bugles and trumpets of each detachment; the general hum through the camp soon told that all were astir, and the toils of another day commenced.

The first few hours were delightfully cool and pleasant; but as the sun rose higher, it became less and less agreeable, and long before we came in sight of the distant belt of trees that marked the course of the Orange River the heat was again intense.

As the river was "up," and there were no means of crossing except by the pontoons and a large flat-bottomed ferry-boat, it was necessary to encamp on the bank during the tedious operation of getting the waggons over. The mules were first embarked, and as there were some 300, all of which objected most obstinately to going on board, it was not effected all at once. One by one the waggons were spoked to the top of the bank and let down by ropes, the boat accommodating one only at a time. All night long the waggons were going across by moonlight; the Dutchmen as well as the officers and men taking watches of four hours. Next morn-

ing, when it came to our turn to cross, the thoughtful and feeling soldiers, scarce speaking above a whisper, let down "the sick officer's waggon" with the greatest care. When about half way across the river, one of the long sweeps worked by the Lancers broke in two, and we were carried some distance down the rapid stream, and at last got entangled among the thick willow-trees below the landing place. A hawser was, with some difficulty, got ashore, and the fatigue party passing it from tree to tree, endeavoured to haul us to an opening, but the rope broke, and in a moment we were whirled round and drifting away towards a dangerous rapid in the middle of the river, the Dutchmen from the ferry screaming to us to keep away from the rocks. But it was much easier to say what to do, than to effect it with one lumbering sweep; in another minute we must all have been "gethan" (*done*), as the Boers prophesied, when a puffing snorting black head, with a rope between its teeth, appeared swimming bravely astern, and a dripping Fingo clambered into the punt with a cable from shore. We were again hauled up to the trees, through which the stream swept with resistless strength, carrying us against the large overhanging branches with such force as nearly to capsize the waggon out of the boat. Four or five Sappers with axes, under direction of Stanton, were in the tree in an instant; while others, swimming about in the boiling flood, cleared away the boughs, and at last we were moored to the bank, but it was so high and perpendicular, as well as thickly wooded, that the waggon had to be entirely unloaded (C—— being carried up in a stretcher), and several large trees felled before the waggon could be got to the top with the united efforts of four and twenty mules and some scores of fellows with tow-ropes and levers.

Night again came round, and still a third of the camp remained on the other side.

In the morning, as we breakfasted under the trees on the edge of the lofty bank, admiring the bright sunny river and its green islands, it was curious to see the cavalry horses swim across, following a mounted Totty. The stream had considerably abated, and they landed safely, and at a very little distance below the drift-path. His Excellency and Staff followed in the pontoon, and our march was resumed.

It was New Year's Day when we again reached Burghersdorp; bran-new waggons painted the brightest red, yellow, and blue, drawn by sleek spans of fat oxen, and filled with Boers, vrouws and children, dressed in their holiday clothes, were pouring into the town; others stood outspanned in groups, with tents pitched round them; the stores were all closed, and service was going on in the church.

Thirty miles a day soon brought us back to the Colony; our eyes were once more delighted with the sight of trees; the bush looked lovely; the mimosas were one sheet of golden blossom, filling the air with the most fragrant perfume; and jessamine, bignonia, and plumbago, with numbers of beautiful flowering bulbs, appeared at every step,—a change most grateful to all after the bare and arid wilderness we had so long been traversing.

On the 9th of January we reached the Blinkwater standing camp, where we met many old friends, and the same evening got to Fort Beaufort, where C——, whose shoulders were bleeding from the constant jolting of the waggon, was moved from his rough, narrow bed, to a four-poster at the little inn; and the kind-hearted Mrs. Mills replaced his awkward nurses.

No outbreak or disturbance whatever had taken place among the thoroughly dispersed Kaffirs, nor had any case of cattle stealing occurred during the long absence of so large a portion of the army.

The Waterkloof, so long contested and dearly won, was at length entirely evacuated by the enemy, and held, without molestation, by very small garrisons.

Seyolo, the T'slambie Chief, one of Sandilli's principal supporters, and a most warlike and active leader in the rebellion, was a prisoner at Cape Town, where, not long afterwards, I visited him in his cell.

Moshesh, the head of the Basutos, we had left at Thaba Bassou, humbled enough, and only too desirous to maintain peace.

In Tambookie Land everything was perfectly quiet, the Tambookies having settled down in profound peace, in their appointed location; and more than 800 applications had been sent in by the Burghers for farms in the unappropriated districts.

Kreli was suing for peace.

The Amatolas and Gaika district were entirely cleared of Kaffirs and Hottentots; Sandilli and the other Chiefs had fled beyond the Kei, and the whole tribe was dispersed.

Thus the war was now virtually brought to an end; the rebel tribes being everywhere vanquished or enfeebled, and the happy effects of restored tranquillity already began to be felt in the country. The settlers, who had fled to the towns for refuge from the outrages of the enemy, began to return to their devastated farms, —the neglected fields were once more under the plough —their ruined houses were again roofed in,—and even those unfortunate farmers, whom a second and a third war might well have driven to hopeless despair, took

courage, and, like the phœnix, the promise of future prosperity once more rose from the ashes of their blackened homesteads.

Not long afterwards Peace was proclaimed, and General Cathcart was enabled to withdraw a large portion of the forces from the scene of their long and harassing campaign. The Rifle Brigade were ordered for home, and the 12th Lancers, 43rd Light Infantry, and 74th Highlanders to India.

After two days' rest, C—— was again placed in a mule waggon, and, with a small cavalry escort, we proceeded by easy stages to Grahams Town and thence to Port Elizabeth, reaching the little harbour on the fourth day. The change, and fresh sea breezes had a wonderful effect on the invalid. One day, a huge steamer hove in sight, which brought wondering crowds to the shore, and rapidly steaming in, proved to be the famed "Great Britain," when, after all the hardships, sufferings, and privations of the campaign, I had the satisfaction of seeing him in a comfortable berth homeward bound.

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Page	Line	
14	14	*for* semicolon *substitute* a comma.
15	27	*for* their Burgher *read* the Burgher.
17*	18	*for* and Marassa's *read* with Mapassa's.
17	23	*for* Basutas *read* Basutos.
23	8	*and elsewhere, for* Fingoe *read* Fingo.
24	30	*after* interest *insert* us.
24	32	*for* C. Capellas *read* Capellos.
30	14	*after* branches *dele the points.*
39	21	*for* clasped-knife *read* clasp-knife.
48	7	*for* bridge *read* ridge.
54	23	*for* them *read* him.
55	10	*for* Windogelberg *read* Windvogelberg.
56	28	*for* Son-of-Vongya *read* son of Vongya.
58	31	*dele* semicolon.
61	25	*for* Son-of-Tyali *read* son of Tyali.
64	23	*for* dahga *read* dagha.
76	8	*insert* were *before* swimming.
241	10	*for* Mc, Como *read* M^{c}Como.
		Plate of Amatola, *for* 16th *read* 26th.

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